

What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Xiaojun Shi, B. A.

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate

Studies in Education

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Faculty of Education, Brock University

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the full-time graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness at the graduate school level, to identify how graduate students perceive effective and ineffective teachers, and specifically to discover the main dimensions of teacher effectiveness that graduate students perceive as most significant. This topic was investigated because, although the teacher has been deemed as a crucial component in the teaching process, there is no common agreement on the definition and measure of teacher effectiveness. Graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness have not been given much attention. The research design was based on a ground theory approach. It utilized qualitative data through interviews, field notes, and journals. The findings of this study revealed that teacher effectiveness is markedly influential to graduate students. There is no universally consented definition or measure of teacher effectiveness due to the multidimensionality of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, several major dimensions of teacher effectiveness were discovered and highlighted in this study. Such dimensions include good command of subject matter, presentation skills, challenging and motivating students, rapport with students, learning environment, course demands, as well as assessment and feedback. It was hoped that the study would move towards developing a theory that contributes to the knowledge base of graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. It was anticipated that the results would provide first-hand information for the instructor to improve teaching; for the administrator to promote the effective educational experiences and student achievements. It was intended that the findings would lay a theoretical and empirical groundwork for future research.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This was a qualitative study of the full-time graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. The subject of teacher effectiveness has received much attention in research literature (Marsh, 1987). Defining and measuring teacher effectiveness plays an important role in many of the decisions made in postsecondary education. Although a great deal of research (e.g., Apps, 1991; Banner & Cannon, 1997; Corder, 2002; Cranton, 1992; Lowman, 1995; Stollenwerk, 2004) has identified the teacher as a crucial component in the teaching process, it is not exactly clear what teacher effectiveness is. The lack of clarity is a result of the diverse aspects of effective teaching. Future research with regard to this topic should aim to gain comprehensive insights to explore the nature of teacher effectiveness, to indicate the importance of teacher effectiveness, and to identify the most significant dimensions for evaluating teacher effectiveness from students' perspectives. In this chapter, I first introduced the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, and the purpose of the study. After discussing the rationale and the importance of the study, the definitions of terms and the limitations of the study were presented. Last, the remainder of the study was outlined.

Background of the Problem

Teaching is an art, in which teachers can have a powerful, long-lasting influence on their students. They directly affect what students learn, how they learn, how much they learn, and the way they interact with one another and with the world around them. Therefore, it is important to understand what teachers should do to promote positive results in the lives of students (Stronge, 2002). Teaching is a complex and difficult undertaking that demands extraordinary abilities. The more we know about teaching, the

better we will be able to influence the learning process. In other words, as our knowledge of the nature of teaching improves, so will our understanding of education and our abilities as effective educators.

Responding to concerns over accountability, and in an effort to improve the quality of education, some faculty and administrators throughout all levels of postsecondary education have spent their entire careers in search of teaching excellence (Smittle, 2003, p. 10). The evaluation of teacher effectiveness as an area for research has a 70-year-old history (Geiger, 1992), and may be regarded as one of the most contested topics within education. Although a great deal of research (e.g., Abrami & d' Apollonia, 1991; Cashin & Downey, 1992; Feldman, 1997; Lowe & Brock, 1994; Marsh & Roche, 1993; Olivares, 2003; Palmer, 1998; Seldin, 1984; Stronge, 2002) has focused on teacher effectiveness, researchers have yet to reach a common agreement on the definition and measure of teacher effectiveness.

What constitutes effective teaching is subject to a variety of perspectives. Many researchers (e.g., Pozo-Munoz, Reboloso-Pacheco, & Fernandez-Ramirez, 2000; Stronge, 2002) define teacher effectiveness by resting on student achievements; or high performance ratings from supervisors; or comments from students, administrators, and other interested stakeholders. A few researchers (e.g., Olivares, 2003) stress that the definition of teacher effectiveness should be grounded in theory. Some researchers (e.g., Arthur, Tubre, Paul, & Edens, 2003; Lowe & Brock, 1994) indicate that the definition of teacher effectiveness depends on one's definition of the goals of teaching. Seldin (1984) proposes a specific definition, which only covers some of the dimensions of teacher effectiveness in a particular context. The complexity of formulating a single definition for

teacher effectiveness, according to researchers (Abrami & d' Apollonia, 1991; Cashin & Downey, 1992; Feldman, 1997; Marsh & Roche, 1993; Palmer, 1998), is due to the multidimensionality of teaching. Consequently, teacher effectiveness should not be summarized or generalized in a single evaluative trend; it should be based on several attributes.

Researchers (e.g., Cashin, 1988; Kolitch & Dean, 1998; Madu & Kuei, 1993) have demonstrated that multiple sources of evidence be considered and gathered when judging teacher effectiveness at the higher education level. However, the lack of consensus over the validity and reliability of such sources has led to a reliance on student evaluation as the essential source and major component for evaluating teacher effectiveness.

Researchers (e.g., Marsh, 1984; McKeachie, 1983) agree that the student evaluation of professors has been considered as the most valid measure of teacher effectiveness. This is a trend that is likely to persist with the increased demand for teaching quality (Feldman, 1997).

Despite the intensive ongoing research on using student evaluation as a key indicator for evaluating teacher effectiveness, a heated debate concerning the merits and shortcomings of student evaluations continues to flourish (Cashin, 1990; Greenwald & Gillmore, 1997b; Hepworth & Oviatt, 1985; Marsh, 1987; McKeachie, 1997). In addition, most researchers (e.g., Arthur et al., 2003; Donaldson, Flannery, & Ross-Gordon, 1993; Forrester-Jones, 2003; Jackson, Teal, Raines, Nansel, Burdsal, & Force, 1999; Kuther, 2003; Lowman, 1996; Marsh & Roche, 1997) in the reviewed literature collected data by utilizing surveys and questionnaires. Such quantitative methodologies can be problematic

(Derry, 1979; Kolitch & Dean, 1998; Tagamori & Bishop, 1995). Consequently, alternatives must be found to eliminate this problem.

Evidently, there is a need for in-depth research, which seeks to clarify students' preferred characteristics of teacher effectiveness (Donaldson et al., 1993).

Statement of the Problem Situation

The research question of this study is, "what are the full-time students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness at the graduate school level?" The study is significant for several reasons. First, defining and measuring teacher effectiveness plays an important role in postsecondary education by providing: (a) formative feedback to faculty for improving instruction, (b) summative information used in personnel decisions, and (c) information to students for the selection of courses and teachers (Marsh & Roche, 1993; Seaman & Fellenz, 1989).

Furthermore, a large body of empirical studies has been conducted in the K-12 and the undergraduate settings. Few studies have been addressed at the graduate school level, and little is known about graduate students' perceptions of the importance, the major dimensions, and the influence of teacher effectiveness. The literature (Donaldson et al., 1993; Lindsay, Breen, & Jenkins, 2002) shows that there appear to be differences between adult graduate students and adult undergraduate students in terms of evaluating teacher effectiveness. For this reason, the present study on graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness is necessary and innovative.

As mentioned previously, evaluating teacher effectiveness is identified as an important area of inquiry in educational research. It remains a controversial topic despite the fact that considerable research (e.g., Abrami & d' Apollonia, 1991; Cashin &

Downey, 1992; Feldman, 1997; Lowe & Brock, 1994; Marsh & Roche, 1993; Olivares, 2003; Palmer, 1998; Seldin, 1984; Stronge, 2002) has been carried out in this arena.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the full-time graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness, to identify how graduate students perceive effective and ineffective teachers, and specifically to discover the main dimensions of teacher effectiveness, which graduate students conceive as most important. The researchable questions which guided the data collection, the data analysis, and the presentation of the findings include:

- How do graduate students define and measure teacher effectiveness?
- What is the importance of teacher effectiveness to graduate students?
- What major dimensions of teacher effectiveness do students perceive as most important at the graduate level?
- How do these dimensions of teacher effectiveness influence graduate students academically and emotionally?

Rationale

The rationale of this qualitative study was personal and professional. Effective teachers make a huge difference for their students. Teaching quality impacts student achievements, their learning processes, and even their values and beliefs. Therefore, teacher effectiveness has been paid great attention in the K-12 and undergraduate settings.

Based on my experience as a student, I have realized the significance of teacher effectiveness, and its necessity in the classroom. I have also recognized the broad scope

of students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness at various academic levels. In elementary school, I thought good teachers were those who listened to me, treated students equally, made me feel clever, helped me when I was stuck, and took time to explain something I did not understand. During my years of middle school and high school, I perceived teacher effectiveness as providing the relevant information to be learned, treating students with respect and care, creating a comfortable classroom environment, and providing a clear expectation for assignments. In my postsecondary studies, my understanding of teacher effectiveness has been further developed. My ideal effective teacher is one who has a good personality; has a good command of subject matter and presentation skills; varies teaching strategies according to students' individual needs; has a great rapport with students; gives prompt and valuable feedback; and uses fair evaluation methods.

Throughout my experience as a student teacher and a teaching assistant, I have recognized that there is a discrepancy between student and teacher in terms of their perceptions of teacher effectiveness. I often wonder why teachers have varied teaching results, even though they teach the same group of students, using the same teaching materials and employing very similar teaching skills. What contributes to these differences? What matters to students? Compelled to pinpoint answers to these questions, I decided to choose teacher effectiveness as the research topic of my M.Ed thesis. In the course entitled Curriculum Processes II: Evaluation and Change, I learned the importance of teacher evaluation and the methods of measuring teacher effectiveness. By reviewing the related literature, I gained a greater understanding and a more comprehensive insight of teacher effectiveness.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that students, the reliable and stable (Marsh & Bailey, 1993) source of teacher evaluation, have been neglected, especially at the graduate school level. Hence, my research topic was narrowed down to explore the full-time graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness.

Importance of the Study

It was hoped that graduate students would understand teacher effectiveness more systematically and accurately. The process of sharing their perceptions of teacher effectiveness may help participants reflect on their own teaching and learning experiences so that they may improve their learning processes and teaching techniques.

It was anticipated that this study would provide first-hand information for instructors to obtain knowledge regarding graduate students' preferred teacher qualities, and improve the quality of teaching. This study may help administrators to better understand the concept of teacher effectiveness, and develop more effective procedures to improve educational experiences and student achievements (Braskamp, Brandenburg, & Ory, 1984).

It was intended that insights and information gained from this study would provide documentation for educators, researchers, practitioners, and the larger community, who may be interested in my research. It was hoped that the specific findings of this study would lay a solid theoretical and empirical foundation for future research.

Definitions of Terms

All terms identified in this section vary by definition throughout the related literature. Based on the purpose and context of this study, I intentionally utilized one definition for each specific term as follows.

Adult

Rogers (1996) identifies *adult* in the following ways:

The word can refer to a stage in the life cycle of the individual; he or she is first a child, then a youth, then an adult. It can refer to status, an acceptance by society that the person concerned has completed his or her novitiate and is now incorporated fully into the community. It can refer to a social sub-set: adults as distinct from children.

Or it can include a set of ideals and values: adulthood. (p. 34)

Adult Education

Adult education refers to the institutionalized system which provides the administrative structure process, program settings, and resources, which facilitate adult learning. Learning may be carried out by individuals acting on their own, acting in one-to-one relationships, and by individuals acting in group settings, as in formal courses provided by colleges, night schools, universities, and other institutions (Brundage & MacKeracher, 1980, p. 5).

Adult Learning

Adult learning is viewed as transforming knowledge, skills, strategies, and values through experience (Knowles, 1975).

Andragogy

Andragogy is the art and science of helping adults learn. Assumptions the andragogical model is based on embody: the self-concept of the learner includes self-directedness; the learner's experience should be used; readiness to learn depends on needs; and orientation to learning is life or problem centered (Cranton, 1992, p. 13).

Education

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) view education as “organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding valuable for all the activities of life” (Jarvis, 1990, p. 105).

Higher Education

It refers to education at degree level and above. Higher education courses are those leading to the award of a bachelor's degree, graduate certificate, graduate diploma, master's degree or doctoral degree. Some courses leading to the award of a diploma or advanced diploma may also be accredited as higher education (The State of Queensland, 2001).

Learning

Learning refers to the process which individuals go through as they attempt to change or enrich their knowledge, values, skills, or strategies, and behaviors possessed by each individual. Learning is most often defined in the literature as a relatively permanent change in behavior as the result of experience, and as the activities involved in this process of change (Knowles, 1975).

Learning Styles

It refers to the preference or predisposition of an individual to perceive and process information in a particular way or combination of ways (Sarasin, 1998, p. 3).

Teacher

The teacher refers to the person whose occupation is teaching. Usually *teacher* would be perceived to refer to K-12 level. However, when it used in my study, it refers to the

postsecondary level. In addition, *teacher* is also referred to by the participants in my study as *professor* and *instructor*.

Teacher Effectiveness

This study was designed to elicit a definition of teacher effectiveness as perceived by graduate students. However, a definition that I would agree with would be: (a) exhibiting a good command of subject matter; (b) possessing effective presentation skills; (c) building a great rapport with students; (d) creating a positive learning environment; (e) encouraging and challenging students to learn; (f) providing valuable assessment and feedback; and (g) assigning reasonable course demands.

Limitations of the Study

There were some limitations related to the research methods and the data collection process. This study was conducted using a grounded theory design of the qualitative research methodology. The small pool of purposeful sample might not guarantee the validity and reliability of the findings. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be suited to the general population. Another possible limitation was the interview process. Some of the participants may have been apprehensive to fully divulge their true perceptions due to the fear of being recognized. In addition, the presence of the audio recording machine, for some, could create a stage fright-like environment that may result in a less than articulate response from the interviewee. Another hindrance in the interview process was the amount of time the participant may be willing to contribute, which could have an effect on the quantity and detail of the data available for analysis.

Outline of the Remainder of the Document

Chapter Two examined the related literature, including teacher effectiveness and adult education. Specifically, in the first part of the literature review, I emphasized upon the definition and measure of teacher effectiveness, the importance of evaluating teacher effectiveness, and the necessity of evaluating teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives. In the second part, I solely focused on the related literature regarding the characteristics of adult education, the role of the adult instructor, the nature of the adult learner, as well as the adult learners' perspectives of teacher effectiveness in several empirical studies.

Chapter Three identified the research methodology undertaken in this study. It comprises of a description of qualitative research approach, the rationale for grounded theory research design, the selection of participants, the ethical consideration, the role of the researcher, data collection and recording, data processing and analysis, methodological assumptions, the research limitation, and establishing credibility.

Chapter Four provided an overview and a summary of the findings of the study. Grounded theory generated by this study was described. Upon presenting the importance and the definition of teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives, I focused on seven major dimensions of teacher effectiveness identified in this study. Such dimensions include: good command of subject matter, presentation skills, challenging and motivating students, rapport with students, learning environment, course demands, as well as assessment and feedback. Last, the relation between personality and teacher effectiveness and the relation between research involvement and teacher effectiveness were analyzed.

Chapter Five presented the summary of this thesis based on the findings in this study and the related literature. Following the discussion of the findings, implications for theory, practice, and further research were provided.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

According to Taylor and Procter (2004), a review of literature is a classification and evaluation of what accredited scholars and researchers have organized and written concerning a specific topic. The purpose of this literature review was to convey the knowledge and ideas previously established regarding the graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness, and to identify the strengths and weaknesses, in light of the research purpose I was pursuing, the problem I was discussing, and the theoretical framework which was guiding the study. The literature review is not a list describing or summarizing one piece of literature after another, and, therefore, I made no attempt to provide a comprehensive summary of substantial knowledge. Indeed, I briefly cited several major findings in order to frame my analysis within the context of this research.

This chapter provided an analytical review of the literature with respect to teacher effectiveness and adult education. In the first part, I focused on the definition and measure of teacher effectiveness, followed by an investigation of the importance of evaluating teacher effectiveness and the necessity of evaluating teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives. In the second part, after discussing the characteristics of adult education, I examined the role of the adult instructor, the nature of the adult learner, as well as the adult learners' perspectives of teacher effectiveness in several empirical studies.

Towards the end of this chapter, I discussed the approaches I used in acquiring the related literature and the limitations of this literature review. It was my intention that this chapter would serve the purpose of providing the comprehensive literature for this study.

Literature Review of Teacher Effectiveness

Definition and Measure of Teacher Effectiveness

Although considerable research (Abrami & d' Apollonia, 1991; Cashin & Downey, 1992; Feldman, 1997; Lowe & Brock, 1994; Marsh & Roche, 1993; Olivares, 2003; Palmer, 1998; Seldin, 1984; Stronge, 2002) has been carried out in the arena of teacher effectiveness, a number of crucial questions continue to persist: What is teacher effectiveness? How may it be defined? How may it be measured? Is it evaluated by the subject content and teaching methods, or by students' satisfaction with the grade? Is an effective teacher one who encourages students to think critically or one who provides clear expectations and varied examples of concepts? Is a teacher one who is knowledgeable but lacks organization more effective than one who is structured yet shows little enthusiasm? To date, educators and researchers have failed to reach a consensus on clear-cut answers to these questions (Young & Shaw, 1999, p. 670).

Teaching quality is a very common and important topic in the education field. Despite decades of experience and research, "one of the most difficult tasks in education today is defining an effective teacher" (Stollenwerk, 2004, p. 3). This has become a daunting task, given its subjectivity and considerable intervening factors, such as the course of study, the level of the student, and the type of curriculum (McLean, 2001; Olivares, 2003; Pozo-Munoz et al., 2000). In addition, many variables, such as "students' personality characteristics, motivation to learn, and learning styles" (Brown & Atkins, 1988, p. 15) which are outside the teacher's control, also affect the potential measures of effectiveness (Stronge, 2002). Consequently, an overview of the recent literature on teacher effectiveness reveals no common agreement upon defining teacher effectiveness.

Researchers' definitions of teacher effectiveness vary as can be seen in the following comments.

Olivares (2003) points out that "a definition of teacher effectiveness should include...what is and what is not included in the trait of teacher effectiveness" (p. 234). He recommends that an acceptable definition of teacher effectiveness assume the integrity of various pieces of valid evidence:

- rating forms adequately capture the domain of teacher effectiveness across instructional settings, academic disciplines, instructors and course levels and types;
- students know what effective teaching is, hold a common view of teacher effectiveness, and are objective and reliable sources of teacher effectiveness data;
- relatedly, ratings are, for all intents and purposes, unaffected by potential biasing variables;
- teacher effectiveness is being measured as opposed to for example, course difficulty or differences in disciplines, student characteristics, grading leniency, teacher expressiveness, teacher popularity or any number of other variables. (p. 236)

Olivares (2003) further stresses that "the definition of teacher effectiveness should be grounded in theory, which should specify what is meant by teacher effectiveness, how teacher effectiveness is related to other constructs, and how teacher effectiveness is related to specific observable behaviors" (p. 235).

Moreover, "effectiveness is best estimated in relation to your own goals of teaching. Thus, what counts as effective in one context may not be so in another" (Brown & Atkins,

1988, p. 4). Drawing upon this notion, McKeachie (1997) indicates that the definition of teacher effectiveness builds upon one's definition of the goals of teaching. If teaching is considered as a service and students are looked upon as the consumers of this service, student satisfaction with teaching quality should be pondered as the primary and most appropriate criteria for evaluating teacher effectiveness (Arthur et al., 2003, p. 278).

Furthermore, Stronge (2002) defines teacher effectiveness in terms of student achievements, and/or focusing on high performance ratings from supervisors, and/or relying upon comments from students, administrators, and other interested stakeholders. Similarly, Pozo-Munoz et al. (2000) attempt to define teacher effectiveness through:

- the concept of teaching excellence, comparing student results with their performance before initiating the educational process;
- system efficiency criteria, relating costs and means with the institutional resources for teaching; and
- meeting criteria or indicators and the achievement of objectives and processes related to improvement and education renovation. (¶ 4)

Additionally, Seldin (1984) proposes a specific definition of the effective teacher as being sincerely interested in subject matter and teaching, exhibiting comprehensive subject knowledge, being well prepared for class, motivating students, and being fair and reasonable in managing learning details. Along the same line, Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) describe effective teaching by applying the succession of adjectives as “being ideal, analytical, dutiful, competent, expert, reflective, satisfying, diversity-responsive, and respected” (p. 29).

Evidently, defining teacher effectiveness is a complex process. Perhaps Marsh (1983) put it best by stating, “effective teaching is a hypothetical construct, and there is no universally accepted measure of it” (p. 163).

Multidimensionality of Defining

Why is teacher effectiveness defined with such diverse viewpoints? Is it possible that we can identify a general concept to cover all factors considered? Researchers and practitioners (e.g., Abrami & d’ Apollonia, 1991; Cashin & Downey, 1992; Feldman, 1997; Marsh & Roche, 1993) agree that teaching is a complex activity consisting of multiple dimensions (e.g., presentation clarity, rapport with students, and enthusiasm), and, therefore, teacher evaluation should reflect this multidimensionality (e.g., a teacher is creative but lacks a good command of the subject matter). The failure to recognize this multidimensionality is important to note as a weakness in many such studies. Consequently, teacher effectiveness cannot be summarized or generalized in a single evaluative trend. Any instrument or methodology which focuses on a unidimensional construct is likely to be inadequate; teacher effectiveness should be based on several attributes (Palmer, 1998, p. 113).

Accordingly, the literature does not offer a clearly articulate definition of teacher effectiveness or agreement regarding the qualities that effective teachers possess. Nonetheless, there are common attributes that characterize effective teachers. In the third part of this section, the major and representative findings in the literature on dimensions of teacher effectiveness were presented.

Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness from Different Findings in the Literature

Research on the evaluation of teacher effectiveness has been flourishing for many years. It is impossible and unnecessary to list all the findings. According to the purpose of this study, I focused on students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness, especially from the perspectives of adult learners. Dimensions of teacher effectiveness from various findings in the literature are displayed in three tables. Prior to examining the tables, it is beneficial to understand the higher-order and first-order model.

Higher-order factor and first-order factor. The higher-order factor is also denominated as the second-order, general or global factor (Feldman, 1976; Keith & Hsu, 1997; Marsh, 1991), which emphasizes on a single, relatively unidimensional, global domain of a concept in teacher evaluation. For instance, Smalzried and Remmers (1943) report two higher-order factors named Professional Maturity and Empathy (see Table 1). Professional Maturity is defined by characteristics such as "presentation of subject-matter, interest in subject, and self-reliance and confidence" (p. 287). In contrast, the first-order factor is the more specific category, which is based on multiple, relatively distinct components of a concept. For example, Marsh's (1982) Student Evaluations of Educational Quality (SEEQ) instrument contains nine first-order factors, including learning/value, enthusiasm, organization, breadth of coverage, group interaction, individual rapport, examinations/grading, assignments, and workload difficulty (see Table 3).

There is an ongoing debate over the first-order and second-order models in terms of teacher effectiveness evaluation. Some researchers (Abrami, 1988, 1989; Abrami &

Table 1

The Higher-order Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness in the Literature Findings

Author(s) & Year	Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness
Smalzried & Remmers (1943)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Maturity • Empathy
Feldman (1976)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor Presentation of Material • Facilitation of Learning • Regulation of Learning
Frey (1978)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogical Skill • Rapport.
Entwistle & Tait (1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Ability; • Openness to students
Brown & Atkins * (1988)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring • Systematic • Stimulating
Lowman & Mathie (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual Excitement • Interpersonal Rapport
Lowman (1995, 1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual Excitement • Interpersonal Rapport
Kolitch and Dean (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual Excitement • Interpersonal Rapport • Alignment

Note. * stands for students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness at the graduate level; the rest are students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness at undergraduate or college level.

d' Apollonia, 1991) seem to initially prefer the sole use of global ratings for teacher evaluation. In a similar vein, Keith and Hsu (1997) assert that the rating on the global factor is taken increasingly as the best indicator of an instructor's effectiveness. However, Marsh (1991) strongly contends that students' evaluations of teacher effectiveness are multidimensional and that their responses could not be sufficiently explained by one or a small number of dimensions. Indeed, he advances that general items cannot adequately represent the multidimensionality of teaching. This notion was previously introduced by Feldman (1976), who notes that the global or higher-order items are not more useful than the more specific categories.

Higher-order factors. As shown in Table 1, Lowman and Mathie (1993) propose two factors of teacher effectiveness—Intellectual Excitement and Interpersonal Rapport, both of which closely correspond to Smalzried and Remmers' (1943) Professional Maturity and Empathy as well as Frey's (1978) Pedagogical Skill and Rapport.

According to Lowman (1996), Intellectual Excitement refers to how clear and interesting the instructor's class is. It portrays professors as performers who stimulate and motivate students. In order to be highly engaging speakers, instructors must have a solid command of subject matter; show their abilities to speak energetically; use gesture and movement before students; demonstrate high creativity and intellectual perspectives when they present content or design assignments (Lowman, pp. 34-35).

Interpersonal Rapport refers to how positive and encouraging instructors are when dealing with students. It encompasses the instructor's concerns for students' learning (Lowman, 1996). Effective teachers demonstrate strong positive attitudes toward students; they memorize and use students' names; they encourage interaction before, during, and

after class; they use democratic rather than autocratic methods to deal with students (Lowman, p. 35). From Lowman's perspective, an instructor who excels in both of these areas "is most likely to be outstanding in meeting a variety of goals for all students and in any setting" (Lowman, 1995, p. 20). Despite the fact that both Intellectual Excitement and Interpersonal Rapport are essential, there is no evidence in support of which is more valuable. Lowman points out that "because the factors dealing with clarity and interest are almost always stronger than factors dealing with interpersonal relationships...students put relatively more weight on an instructor's presentations skill" (p. 34). However, McLean (2001) supports the opposite by remarking that "personal attributes were ranked more highly by students than technical issues such as being punctual and presenting organized lectures" (p. 368).

In addition to Intellectual Excitement and Interpersonal Rapport, Kolitch and Dean (1998) contribute another level of complexity by identifying *alignment*. Alignment means that effective teachers are those who clearly lay out course objectives; state the expectations at the beginning of the course; organize a course to meet specific objectives; and enrich a course with various techniques so as to facilitate student learning. This additional factor of effective teaching supplements other factors falling outside the Intellectual Excitement and Interpersonal Rapport categories.

First-order dimensions. The handful of empirical studies in this area indicate, as stated earlier in this section, that there is no common agreement upon the definition and measure of teacher effectiveness, so it is not surprising to discover distinct discrepancies on dimensions of teacher effectiveness in the reviewed literature. Table 2 and Table 3 served as ample evidence that students' evaluation of teacher effectiveness is

Table 2

Summary and Distribution of the First-order Factors of Teacher Effectiveness in the Literature Findings

Author(s) and year Factors	Smittle 2003	Yost* 2002	Jackson et al 1999	Patrick & Smart 1998	Crader & Butler 1996	Donaldson et al * 1993	Ramsden 1992	Marsh 1987	Burdsal & Bardo 1986	Medley 1979	Frey Leonard & Beatty 1975
Teaching Competency	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	
Presentation Skills		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓		✓ ✓
Effective Methods	✓	✓ ✓						✓		✓ ✓	
Classroom Atmosphere	✓						✓			✓	✓
Rapport with Students			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Challenging and Motivating Students	✓			✓	✓	✓ ✓		✓			
Course Demands			✓			✓		✓ ✓ ✓	✓		✓
Assessment & Feedback	✓		✓				✓	✓ ✓	✓		✓
Course Value			✓		✓ ✓			✓	✓		✓
Personality	✓						✓			✓	

Note. * stands for students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness at the graduate level; the rest are students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness at undergraduate or college level.

Table 3

Distribution and Explanation of First-order Factors of the Literature Findings

Categories and subcategories	Author(s)and year	Categories and subcategories	Author(s)and year
Teaching Competency:		Presentation Skills:	
✓ Master of a repertoire of competencies	Medley 1979	✓ Presentation clarity	Frey et al 1975
✓ To be knowledgeable	Donaldson, et al 1993	✓ Organization/planning	Frey et al 1975
✓ Breadth of coverage	Marsh 1982	✓ Organization and presentations skills	Patrick and Smart 1998
✓ Teacher capability	Crader and Butler 1996	✓ To present material clearly	Donaldson et al 1993
✓ Content knowledge	Yost 2002	✓ Organization	Marsh 1982
✓ Good command of subject matter	Smittle 2003	✓ Course organization/structure	Burdsal and Bardo 1986
		✓ Course organization and design	Jackson, et al 1999
		✓ Communication skills	Yost 2002
		✓ Provides understandable explanation	Ramsden 1992
		✓ To be organized	Ramsden 1992
Effective Methods:		Classroom Atmosphere:	
✓ User of effective methods	Medley 1979	✓ Creator of a good classroom atmosphere	Medley 1979
✓ Instructional style	Yost 2002	✓ Class discussion	Frey et al 1975
✓ Communicate high standards	Smittle 2003	✓ Provide open and responsive learning environment	Smittle 2003
✓ Professional decision maker	Medley 1979	✓ Encouraging independence ,control and active engagement	Ramsden 1992
✓ Group interaction	Marsh 1982		
✓ Planning and management skills	Yost 2002		

Rapport with Students:		Course Demands:	
✓ Personal attention	Frey et al 1975	✓ Workload	Frey, et al 1975
✓ Rapport with students	Jackson, et al 1999	✓ Assignment	Marsh 1982
✓ Respect for students	Patrick and Smart 1998	✓ Workload difficulty	Marsh 1882
✓ Respect for students	Crader and Butler 1996	✓ Level of material	Burdsal & Bardo 1986
✓ To show concern for student learning	Donaldson et al 1993	✓ The relevance of the class material	Donaldson et al 1993
✓ Individual rapport	Marsh 1982	✓ Course difficulty	Jackson, et al 1999
✓ Attitude toward students	Burdsal & Bardo 1986		
✓ Concern and respect for students	Ramsden 1992		
Course Value:		Assessment & Feedback:	
✓ Learning/value	Marsh 1982	✓ Grading	Frey, et al 1975
✓ Course value to students	Burdsal & Bardo 1986	✓ Examination/grading	Marsh 1982
✓ Course value	Jackson, et al 1999	✓ Grading quality	Burdsal and Bardo 1986
✓ Student development	Crader and Butler 1996	✓ Fairness of grading	Jackson, et al 1999
✓ Teacher task responsiveness	Crader and Butler 1996	✓ Appropriate assessment and feedback	Ramsden 1992
✓ Student accomplishment	Frey, et al 1975	✓ Engage in ongoing evaluation	Smittle 2003
Challenging and Motivating Students		Personality:	
✓ Ability to challenge students	Patrick and Smart 1998	✓ Possessor of desirable personal traits	Medley 1979
✓ To motivate	Donaldson et al 1993	✓ Commit to teaching students	Yost 2002
✓ To be enthusiastic	Donaldson et al 1993	✓ A willingness to learn from students	Ramsden 1992
✓ Enthusiasm	Marsh 1982		
✓ Encouragement to students	Crader and Bulter 1996		
✓ Address noncognitive issues that affect learning	Smittle 2003		

multidimensional in nature. As well, the tables outlined similarities in the content of the dimensions across the studies. As shown in Table 2 and Table 3, 10 representative categories were generated to cover all the first-order factors discovered in this literature review. Amongst them, Presentation Skills and Rapport with Students are most commonly valued by scholars and researchers. According to the literature findings, the main first-order dimensions of teacher effectiveness were summarized and presented as follows.

The dimension of Presentation Skills (see Table 3) requires that instructors possess outstanding communication and organization skills, present materials clearly so as to answer students' questions and meet course objectives. Presentation clarity has been regarded as the most important factor by many educators and researchers in literature. Stollenwerk (2004) indicates that effective teachers make their points clear to learners who may be at different levels of understanding; explain concepts in ways that help students follow along in a logical order; have an oral delivery that is direct, audible, and understandable to all students; inform clear lesson objectives; utilize examples and illustrations to explain and clarify; offer review or summary at the end of each lesson (pp. 12-13). In order to present effectively, teachers also have to prepare themselves well. Darling-Hammond (1992) points out that fully prepared teachers are more effective in the classroom, and their students demonstrate greater achievements than students whose teachers are not sufficiently prepared. Fully prepared teachers are more effective than unprepared teachers in knowing how to guide and encourage student learning, knowing how to individualize student learning, how to plan productive lessons, and how to diagnose student problems.

Quite similar to the factor of Interpersonal Rapport (see Table 1), Rapport with Students (see Table 3) facilitates the instructor to come across as a person as well as a teacher (Jackson et al., 1999). Solas (1990) states that the most important characteristic of effective teaching is the sound relationship between instructor and student. The instructor is respectful of students and is concerned about students' progress. The instructor gives the students the feeling of belonging by collecting contact information; recognizing students as individuals; calling students' names; and arranging meetings during office hours (Smittle, 2003, p. 11). The educational impact of faculty is enhanced when their interaction with students extend beyond the formal classroom to informal non-classroom settings (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Approachability, responsiveness, and mutual respect (Ng, Murphy, & Jenkins, 2002) facilitate students in class to feel free to ask questions and make comments; allow students to display his or her learning positively; and improve students' problem solving, critical thinking, and other learning skills (Stollenwerk, 2004).

Teaching Competency (see Table 3) means that students expect "professors to act with professionalism, to employ a vast base of content knowledge" (Kuther, 2003, p. 158). In other words, "effective teaching requires a substantial commitment to the content or subject matter; the teacher's primary responsibility is to represent the content accurately and efficiently and ensure that students master the content" (Bates & Poole, 2003, p. 41). Similarly, Banner and Cannon (1997) state that teaching involves the transmission of knowledge; in order to teach successfully, the instructor must demonstrate mastery of a subject. They further add that knowledge is ever-changing, and ever-growing; in order to keep up with current knowledge of the subjects, teachers must devote themselves to

updating their knowledge. Hence, “professional development is the key to helping effective teachers manage change that is inherent in the 21st century” (Smittle, 2003, p. 14).

Volkwein and Cabrera (1998) suggest that the most significant factor in affecting multiple aspects of student growth and satisfaction is the classroom experience. Consequently, there is a need for a good Classroom Atmosphere (see Table 3) in which students can be provided an open, responsive, and supportive learning environment so that they involve themselves in class activities positively. This notion seems to correspond to the finding reported by George, Rogers, Notar, and Pascal (1977) that “a student’s learning should lead to positive consequences. Learning environments should be designed to eliminate things which cause students to become frustrated, confused, anxious, bored, etc.” (p. 33).

Challenging and Motivating Students (see Table 3) to learn and to participate in learning activities may be one of the most difficult tasks in teaching (Smittle, 2003). “Uninterested teachers cannot motivate students without motivation” (Smittle, p. 11) and, therefore, the teacher’s enthusiasm towards subject matter and towards teaching has been found to be related to teacher effectiveness (Kerin, Peterson, & Martin, 1975).

Enthusiasm has been regarded as “one of the most important characteristics of the effective instructor” (Mayo, Donnelly, Nash, & Schwartz, 1993, p. 232). In an effort to help students enhance learning, effective teachers may encourage students by identifying learning goals, making use of students’ interests and background information, demonstrating the relevance of materials, and teaching students strategies for independent learning (Smittle, 2003, p. 12). Good teachers also “awaken students to values and

ideologies within their disciplines, challenge the status quo, and encourage students to take critical stances to empower them to action” (Bates & Poole, 2003, p. 42).

The factor of Course Demands (see Table 3) reflects workload, assignments, the relevance of the class material, and course difficulty. Jackson et al. (1999) state that course difficulty refers to the rate of coverage, level, and amount of materials. Workload is defined by the number and difficulty of the assignments. They also claim that the high level of course demands is neither good nor bad (p. 592). In addition, course content and design should consider the needs and interests of the student population. The needs of students must be identified and the course or assignment should be designed to give students a broader vision and to support their career aspirations (Madu & Kuei, 1993, p. 335).

Providing assessment and feedback is an indispensable ingredient in the teaching process. Bates and Poole (2003) remark that “assessment includes individual growth as well as absolute achievement” (p. 42). How students should be assessed, according to Bates and Poole, needs “to be considered throughout the design and development of a course” (p. 197). They further argue that “a list of measurable learning objectives would need to be specified” (p. 43); “assessment should be directly related to the stated learning outcomes of the course” (p. 197). Additionally, the instructor should clearly define methods of assessment (Lowe and Brock, 1994, p. 84). With respect to feedback, Panasuk and Lebaron (1999) remark that feedback is information provided by the teacher about the student’s performance and recommendations for future improvement. “Early, frequent, meaningful, and clear feedback is a major factor in helping students hone their metacognitive skills” (Smittle, 2003, p. 11).

As shown in Table 2, there are not many first-order factors falling under the dimension of Personality (see Table 3). This dimension, rarely appearing in the literature, is another controversial topic among researchers. According to Ramsden (1991), instructors' personalities have little to do with effective teaching. A similar statement was made by Stollenwerk (2004), "using assessments of personality, attitude, general experience, achievement, and aptitude to define a good teacher was too remote from the teacher's day-to-day work in the classroom to contribute meaningfully to a definition of a good teacher" (p. 6). However, it is interesting to note that Combs (1969, as cited in Jenkins & Downs, 2001, Introduction section, ¶ 3) believes personality influences attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions, which would influence the instructor's teaching behaviors. In the same vein, some educators (e.g., Parker & Spink, 1997; Ramsden, 1992; Yost, 2002) argue that the teacher's personal traits are playing an important role in the definition of an ideal teacher. According to Feldman (1986), "the more effective the teacher appears to be, the more likely the teacher is perceived as energetic, sympathetic, ascendant, reflective, high in self-regard, flexible, emotionally stable, sociable, intelligent, and responsible" (p. 159).

According to the three tables, it is interesting to note that the first-order factors (see Table 3) and higher-order factors (see Table 1) appear noticeably overlapping, inclusive, or complementary. For example, the two representative first-order factors—Presentation Skills and Rapport with Students—seem to correspond to the two higher-order structures—Intellectual Excitement and Interpersonal Rapport (see Table 1). The relations within the first-order factors are intersectional and echoing. For instance, the subcategory of To Show Concern for Student Learning in the factor of Rapport with

Students could be categorized under Effective Methods as well. As such, Encouragement to Students in the factor of Challenging and Motivating Students could fall under the factor of Effective Methods.

In conclusion, although there are likely additional dimensions that could be proposed to evaluate teacher effectiveness, it was hoped that the factors summarized in these three tables would provide a comprehensive basis for evaluating students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness at the graduate school level.

Importance of Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness

Since teacher effectiveness is a markedly complicated concept and seemingly impossible to define with certainty, why have researchers put so much effort into it?

As an art, teaching is a complex and difficult undertaking that demands extraordinary abilities. The more we know about teaching, the better we will be able to influence the learning process (Solas, 1990). Stronge (2002) indicates that one of the clear and abiding hallmarks of effective teaching is to facilitate student learning. That is, teacher success equals student success (p. 65). Consequently, responding to concerns over accountability and in an effort to achieve quality outcomes by promoting students' capacity to learn, encouraging students to achieve beyond their own expectations and fostering independent learning processes (Australian Higher Education Council, 1992, cited in Patrick & Smart, 1998, ¶ 2), the subject of teacher effectiveness as an area for research has received more than 70 years' attention (Geiger, 1992).

Defining and measuring teacher effectiveness plays an important role in many of the decisions made at all levels of postsecondary institutions by providing: (a) formative feedback to faculty for improving teaching; (b) a summative measure of teaching

effectiveness to be used in personnel decisions; (c) information to students for the selection of courses and teachers (Marsh & Roche, 1993); and (d) “an outcome or a process description for research on teaching” (Marsh, 1991, p. 285). Similarly, but slightly more detailed, Seaman and Fellenz (1989) state that the central focus in evaluating teaching is: (a) to improve the instruction; (b) to promote personal growth and self-assessment; (c) to evaluate the degree of demonstrable achievement by the teacher; (d) to diagnose future learning needs; (e) to enhance one’s own sense of merit or worth; and (f) to identify and/or clarify desired behaviors.

Despite the various complexities of defining teacher effectiveness, and regardless of which dimensions are emphasized, there is a common agreement that effective teachers do have an extraordinary and lasting impact on the lives of students (Stronge, 2002). As a result, it is no surprise to discover that researchers and practitioners design diverse and complementary evaluation instruments and use various indicators to assess the dimensions of teacher effectiveness in multiple educational settings.

Necessity of Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness from Graduate Students’ Perspectives

Accuracy

Most educators and researchers recommend that multiple sources of evidence be gathered and considered when judging teacher effectiveness. But the lack of consensus over the validity and reliability of other types of indicators, such as classroom observations, self-evaluation, videotape critiques, and examination of course documents (Jackson et al., 1999, p. 580) has led to “widespread dependence on student evaluations as the essential source and major component of teaching proficiency” (Kolitch & Dean, 1998, p. 120). Marsh and Bailey (1993) also agree that students’ evaluation of teaching

effectiveness is relatively valid against a variety of indicators of effective teaching, and relatively unaffected by a variety of variables hypothesized as potential biases to the evaluation.

Necessity

Some researchers (e.g., Cashin, 1988; Marsh, 1984) demonstrate that the student evaluation of professors has been considered as the most valid measure of teacher effectiveness. This is a trend that is likely to persist with the increased emphasis on teaching quality (Feldman, 1997). The reason for this is obvious: “students as major consumers of the services offered by teaching institutions” (Madu & Kuei, 1993, p. 335) are a convenient choice for raters. As McKeachie (1983) points out, “students are in class...and they know what’s going on. They are the ones we are trying to affect and they have some sense of whether they are learning” (p. 38). So it has been a reasonable and practical method to determine the criteria of effective teaching by asking students to specify the attitudes, behaviors, and pedagogical practices that they feel are the most valuable (Donaldson et al., 1993, p. 157).

Additionally, students’ hypothesized candid reactions could be a beneficial aid to provide feedback for the teacher in refining course structures and teaching styles, as Seldin (1984) notes, students are a valuable source of judgmental information in the overall evaluation of an instructor and of the course quality. Involving students in the evaluation process helps them to reflect on what has been learned and how the learning has been mastered. Student feedback converted into teaching improvement increases teacher effectiveness.

Particularity

The reviewed literature demonstrates that the majority of empirical studies have been performed in the K-12 settings and the undergraduate background. Few studies have been conducted at the graduate level, and little is known about graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness.

Lindsay et al. (2002) propose a number of good reasons for extending the study to the graduate level. First of all, despite the fact that graduate students are vital to the continuity of the university system, their voices concerning teacher effectiveness evaluation have been neglected. Second, graduate students usually have more intimate interactions with teachers than undergraduate so that they may be more articulate and critical when evaluating teacher effectiveness (p. 12). Last, "because of their advanced training, postgraduate students are in a better position than undergraduates to make informed judgments about the impact of research upon the quality teaching" (p. 13).

Furthermore, it seems that there are differences between adult graduate students and adult undergraduate students in terms of evaluating teacher effectiveness. Donaldson et al. (1993) reveal that graduate students are prone to mention:

good role modeling; adaptation to student needs, success of the instructor in motivating students; instructor dedication; the instructor's knowledge level; course organization; personal organization of the instructor; use of diverse [teaching] techniques; instructors' encouragement of active learning; instructor openmindedness; and, instructor's warmth. (p. 154)

In conclusion, the validity of students' perspectives of teacher effectiveness has been thoroughly analyzed and generally supported in the literature (Marsh, 1987; Marsh &

Bailey, 1993; Ramsden, 1991), and therefore information from students' perspectives remains a highly valued source for evaluating teacher effectiveness (Ramsden). Graduate students have been neglected in the debate over evaluating teacher effectiveness. There is a need to explore students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness at the graduate level.

Literature Review of Adult Education

The scope of this study is limited to the graduate school level, and, therefore, in the following sections, I concentrated closely on the related literature of adult education. Four parts were provided in order of the characteristics of adult education, roles of the adult instructor, nature of the adult learner, and adult learners' perspectives of effective teaching in empirical studies.

Characteristics of Adult Education

The practice of adult education has been historically humanist in nature (Cranton, 1992; Rogers, 2002). Such a nature requires that instructors identify needs and interests of learners; create a positive learning atmosphere; provide enthusiasm and support; emphasize interaction among people; and provide options and flexibility to match individual preferences. Consequently, respect for the uniqueness of learners, self-directed approaches, and building a rapport between instructor and learner are the main issues which have received great attention in adult education literature for many years (Brookfield, 1991; Knowles, 1980; Smith, 1982).

An estimated 70 percent of adult learning is self-directed learning (Cross, 1981). Knowles (1975) provides reasons for incorporating self-direction in the instructional activities with adults. He suggests: (a) learners appear to learn more and better when they

take initiative in the educational process; (b) self-direction seems “more in tune with our natural process of our psychological development” (p. 14); and (c) many educational innovations such as distance learning, continuing education, and lifelong learning require that learners bear more responsibility and initiative in their own learning.

As a goal of adult education (Cranton, 1992, p. 109), self-directed learning has been considered not only as an outcome but also a process, in which adults with diverse levels of education, experience, commitment, and expectation (Corder, 2002) are able to diagnose learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes (Apps, 1988; Knowles, 1975; 1984b). More specifically, Maclearn (1987) outlines five attributes for learner-centered adult education: (a) the emergent and adaptable design of the course process; (b) interdependence and/or a comfortable learning environment; (c) reflective, creative, and open-ended knowledge system; (d) critical reflection; and (e) critical self-evaluation. Thus, much of educational literature is rooted in emphasizing the significance of engaging adult learners in choosing the learning content, learning strategies, and the evaluation method (Sisco & Hiemstar, 1991, p. 57).

In order to successfully motivate adult learners, the process of teaching adults must be a democratic and collaborative effort. Galbraith (1991) advances the concept of the Transactional Process, which means instructors and learners are engaged in a mutual challenge, critical reflection, interactive support, active transformation, and risk-taking (p. 4). Galbraith further argues that the groundwork of the adult learning process is collaboration, by which learning experience becomes more meaningful and rewarding for both instructor and learner. Openness and risk-taking are essential ingredients in the

transactional educational process (Galbraith, p. 4). In addition, Brookfield (1991) formulates the Grounded Teaching Theory which emphasizes that effective teaching should place the learner's experience in the center of educational activities. "Using experience as a way of learning and using experience as resource for learning are two fundamental concepts in adult education" (Cranton, 1992, p. 57).

By and large, teaching and learning is a process of mutual responsibility and accountability between teacher and student. Instructors and learners are reciprocal partners in the learning experience. Instructors implement techniques and strategies, and provide materials or resources; meanwhile students supply feedback and evaluate their own learning. Throughout the process, "all participants are involved in planning and interaction" (Cranton, 1992, p. 22), and are engaged in thinking, reflection, change, and growth.

Roles of the Adult Instructor

The adult educator is one who supports personal growth, encourages changes in self-perception and self-concept, and facilitates the development of self-awareness (C. Rogers, 1951, cited in Cranton, 1992, p. 8). Smith (1982) believes that helping adult learners to learn is the most significant function a teacher can perform.

More specifically, Cranton (1992) expands on the responsibilities of the adult educator by breaking up the role into sub-roles, such as expert, planner, facilitator, resource person, manager, and role model. She claims that in the expert role, the instructor delivers a lecture or demonstration. This instructor-centered method works more effectively when learners are unfamiliar with the learning content. In the role of the planner, the instructor sets learning goals, chooses teaching materials, and selects

effective strategies. In this process, the learner's needs, interests, and experiences should be considered; otherwise, the learning process could be boring and unfruitful. As a facilitator (Feldman, 1976), the instructor can aid learners to exercise their educational intentions. However, it cannot be used as the main role, especially when the learners have no experience with self-directed learning. The instructor is also the resource person who provides resources for the learning process in order for students to attain their learning goals. As a manager (Feldman), the instructor keeps track of what students learn and how they learn. As well, the adult educator acts as a role model, which the student may observe, imitate, and eventually apply what they have learned to their learning process and real life experience (pp. 69-99).

Moreover, in comparison to the teachers at other academic levels, graduate school instructors play additional roles, such as the mentor, the project supervisor, and the researcher.

There are multiple reasons that teachers mentor students at the graduate level. The two main ones include: (a) "teachers pass on knowledge of subjects to improve educational achievement" (Heller & Sindelar, 1991, p. 7); and (b) teachers mentor students to help personal development, encourage students to make wise choices, and/or facilitate them to make the transition from school to society (Zeeb, 1998). Zachary (2002) further indicates that "teachers who prepare themselves as mentors increase their potential to enhance student growth and development, help students maximize education experiences, and enrich their own teaching experience and professional development" (p. 27). As a process-oriented relationship, mentoring involves knowledge acquisition,

application, and critical reflection. “Learning is the fundamental process, purpose, and product of mentoring” (Zachary, p. 28).

Another complex and challenging task for instructors is to provide project supervision. To be an effective project supervisor, instructors need to be effective both in research and supervision (Brown & Atkins, 1988, p. 115). According to Brown and Atkins, the role of the supervisor is (a) to help students determine the research topic and the appropriate methodology; (b) to provide access to resources or expertise; (c) to teach research techniques; (d) to assist students to resolve technical problems by suggesting alternatives; (e) to authorize students to make decisions, and support student’s decisions; (f) to give encouragement and show interest; and (g) to check progress regularly and give systematic feedback. In short, a good supervisor is concerned with the intellectual growth of students, and their personal feelings, not entirely with the mechanics of the project (Brown & Atkins).

The instructor’s role as researcher appears to be a controversial theme. Pozo-Munoz et al. (2000) indicate that a higher education teacher usually acquires prestige due to his/her research achievements and academic position of authority but not teaching abilities. Nevertheless, some researchers (e.g., Cranton, 1992; Lowman, 1995; Stollenwerk, 2004) believe that teaching should be the fundamental activity of university teachers. Marsh and Hattie (2002) support this notion that unsatisfactory classroom performance might result from instructors who neglect their teaching responsibilities in order to pursue research and publication endeavors. Additionally, Lindsay et al. (2002) concede disadvantages associated with research-active instructors: (a) they are less approachable to students; (b) they are sometimes preoccupied with research at the

expense of teaching; and (c) they may distort the curriculum based on their research interests.

In contrast, some researchers claim that, in order to effectively achieve the teaching objectives, educators should be able to contribute to the existing information and enrich the knowledge base. This belief is reiterated by Bemowski (1991) who points out that teachers teach best what they know best. Thus, research should not be separated from teaching. An effective researcher can also be an effective teacher, especially in terms of presenting more challenging ideas that go beyond rudimentary knowledge (Madu & Kuei, 1993, p. 331). Similarly, Lindsay et al. (2002) assert that, although students identify disadvantages arising from staff research, there is considerable agreement over the benefits. Such benefits include “lecture enthusiasm, currency of lecturer knowledge and scholarship, and enhanced credibility of individual staff members and the institution as a whole” (p. 311).

To sum up, the instructor’s roles are diverse due to the multifaceted nature of adult learning and the setting in which they occur. Basically, the responsibilities of adult educators are to aid students in identifying their specific learning styles and to seek effective strategies to adapt to individual learning needs. In other words, beyond the aim to teach the specific content is the broader objective to build competent self-directed learners who have developed the self-confidence and skills to direct their own learning (Brookfield, 1991; Knowles, 1980; Smith, 1982).

Nature of the Adult Learner

Rogers (2002) presents a list of the general characteristics of adult student-learners; they:

- define themselves as adults;
- are in the middle of a process of growth, not at the start of a process;
- bring with them a package of experiences and values;
- come to education with intentions;
- bring expectations about the learning process;
- have competing interests; and
- already have their own set of patterns of learning. (p. 71)

These characteristics seem to be echoed by Corder (2002) who remarks that adult learners almost invariably have some previous knowledge about a subject. But the level and amount of knowledge are different. They also have some degree of experience, which is interpreted in multiple ways. With a great deal of commitment, adult students learn for reasons of personal or professional gain. Nevertheless, they may lack self-confidence. In an unfamiliar learning environment, they could be frightened of failing and full of apprehension and anxiety (Corder).

There is a general acceptance that experience forms the basis of learning (Rogers, 2002). Learning is an active process in which students' needs and expectations related to teaching and learning have been influenced by their background, previous experiences, and future outlook (Das & El-Sabban, 1996). Hence, with the range of qualifications, age and attitudes (Corder, 2002), learners are "continually trying to understand and make sense of their experience" (Panasuk & Lebaron, 1999, p. 358), and "demand strong links between educational theory and experiential learning methods" (Madu & Kuei, 1993, p. 335).

In accordance with Knowles' (1980, 1984a) philosophy of adult education, Cranton (1992) asserts four characteristics of adult learners. The first one is self-directing. In the self-directed learning process, there should be a comfortable, supportive, and respectful atmosphere, in which adults feel accepted and encouraged to diagnose their own needs and design their own learning plans. With the teacher's help, learners should be involved in self-evaluation as well. Second, adults have many varied experiences through which learners look at their experiences objectively and learn from them. At the same time, they apply what they have learned to their daily lives. The third characteristic is that adults are ready to learn, which requires that curriculum should cater to the real-life needs of individuals. Last, adults prefer problem-centered and performance-based learning, which requires the development of learning to be suited to individual concerns (pp. 13-14).

Working under the same theoretical paradigm, Panasuk and Lebaron (1999) describe the nature of adult learners as: (a) being self-directing; (b) acquiring positive benefit from experience; (c) holding remarkable readiness to learn; (d) conducting educational activities with a life-centered, tasked-based, and problem-oriented manner; (e) being self-motivated (p. 358).

According to the principle of andragogy (Knowles, 1980), it is safe to conclude that adult learners have a need to be self-directing; they learn best when they are engaged in diagnosing, practicing, and evaluating their own learning; they learn best when they are motivated by specific educational needs. Life experience is a primary learning resource for adult learners and they have an inherent need for immediacy of application in real life.

Adult Learners' Perspectives of Teacher Effectiveness

In accordance with the rationale that learning is meaningful, Ramsden (1992) proposes that, in an effort to improve teaching, educators must know about the experience of learning from the student's point of view. He further states that instructors cannot teach more effectively until they see what they are doing from the student's perspective. In order to better serve for the purpose of this study, it was worthwhile to put an added emphasis on adult learners' perspectives of teacher effectiveness. Originating from several accredited studies, the following research findings reinforced the reviewed literature into a comprehensive and stimulating insight.

Centra (1979) claims that the most frequently named characteristics that are looked for in a teacher by students are communication skills, attitude towards students, knowledge of subject matter, good organizational skills, enthusiasm about subject, fairness of grading, flexibility, and encouragement of students to think critically.

These findings appear to be closely related to the later research conducted by Donaldson et al. (1993). The data of this study were derived from three different samples of adult college students' by using three distinct data collection methods. After combining, recoding, and reanalyzing data, the results manifest six common traits of teacher effectiveness. They are: "to be knowledgeable; to show concern for student learning; to present material clearly; to motivate; to emphasize the relevance of the class material; and to be enthusiastic" (p. 150). These attributes are consistent with the philosophy of adult education proposed by adult educators (e.g., Knowles, 1980, 1984a, 1984b; Apps, 1991).

In the study of graduate students and faculty's views of effective psychology courses, Lowe and Brock (1994) identify four constructs that students rate most important: (a) instructors integrate practical applications to teaching; (b) the course is intellectually challenging; (c) assignments and/or requirements invigorate creative thinking and critical thinking; and (d) presentations are informative (p. 83). In addition, some items are also important for students but not for faculty: (a) course objectives and assignment are clearly defined; (b) the course has relevant readings/textbooks; (c) instructor provides effective feedback; and (d) the instructor clearly defines methods of evaluation (p. 84). So in this study, students consider those who are creative, practical, challenging, and informative as effective teachers. These findings are similar to Feldman's (1988) study: students put more emphasis on the teacher's responsibility to stimulate interest, having good elocutionary skills, and being available and helpful.

Greimel-Fuhrmann and Geyer (2003) carried out an empirical evaluation research on Students' Evaluations of Teaching (SETs). The analysis of the interview data confirms that clear explanations, a willingness to help students, and more creative teaching strategies are the consistently recurring factors expected in teaching quality from the students' perspectives. A good teacher is friendly, considerate to understand students' position, and shows concern for their problems without being too lenient or too strict (p. 232). The findings also show that "clear explanations, concrete examples and feedback on their learning progress are more important to them than friendliness, patience and classroom management" (p. 237).

Ng et al. (2002) conducted a study which shows that students portray a picture of effective teachers as follows: they encourage exploration, analysis, and presentation of

students' own ideas; they share experiences and most up-to-date research findings with students; they align assessments with their teaching goals; they emphasize learning processes rather than outcomes; they empower students with the tools to learn and be responsible for their own learning; they are concerned about students' learning (p. 470).

In the study that investigated students' perceptions of lectures, seminars, and modules in a university of sociology and social policy, results show that students perceive good lectures as "structured and audible" and "enthusiastic about their subject" (Forrester-Jones, 2003, p. 65). Similar findings are reported by Murray (1983), who emphasizes that presenting demonstratively and distinctly with passion for the subject matter is an important aspect of the effective lecturer for students.

Because those empirical studies were conducted in various countries and different fields by using diverse instruments, the findings may reveal strikingly different attributes from one to another. Nevertheless, there are some overlapping factors, such as good presentation skills, challenging and motivating students, concern for student learning, and enthusiasm. These factors seem to correspond with the major dimensions of teacher effectiveness from a variety of resources mentioned earlier in Table1, Table 2, and Table 3.

Approach to Reviewing the Literature

Although extensive research(Abrami & d' Apollonia, 1991; Cashin & Downey, 1992; Feldman, 1997; Lowe & Brock, 1994; Marsh & Roche, 1993; Olivares, 2003; Palmer, 1998; Seldin, 1984; Stronge, 2002) has been conducted in the arena of teacher effectiveness, research at the graduate school level is relatively sparse. So I decided to enlarge the research scope to higher education when I performed the related literature

review at the very beginning. Also, the findings are based on different grounds, reflect different contexts, and represent the various interests or the preoccupations of specific organizations. In addition, overwhelmed by a large body of findings, I cited several major and representative findings in order to frame my analysis within the context of this research.

Chapter Summary and Conclusions

For this literature review, I sought to construct a framework for evaluating teacher effectiveness from the perspectives of the full-time graduate students.

In the first part of the literature review, I focused on teacher effectiveness. I intended to formulate an accurate definition; however, the reviewed literature demonstrates that there is no standard definition on what teacher effectiveness is, and no common agreement upon how to measure it. The reason for this is that teaching is a complex activity consisting of multiple dimensions; therefore, evaluations of teachers should reflect this multidimensionality. Researchers have defined teacher effectiveness based on the grounded theory, the goal of education, student achievements, or comments from students, administrators, and other interested stakeholders.

Regarding the dimensions of teacher effectiveness from different literature findings, I constructed three tables to display the higher-order factors and the first-order factors. The relations between the first-order factors and the second-order factors appear to overlap, include, or complement each other. The relations within the first-order factors seem to be intersectional and echoing.

Following the section of definition and measure of teacher effectiveness, I discussed the importance of evaluating teacher effectiveness, and the necessity of evaluating

teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives. The literature indicates that evaluation of teacher effectiveness is an indispensable part of education. It can provide formative feedback to teachers, students, and administrators. Although educators and researchers recommend that multiple sources of evidence be considered when judging teacher effectiveness, the student evaluation of teachers has been considered as the most valid measure of teacher effectiveness.

In the second part of the literature review, I put a heavy emphasis on adult education. There is an extremely large body of literature on adult education, but based on the purpose of my study, I only explored characteristics of adult education, roles of the adult instructor, nature of the adult learner, and adult learners' perspectives of teacher effectiveness in some empirical studies.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This chapter started with a description of the qualitative research approach used in this study. Following this, the specific research design—grounded theory, was addressed in detail, along with a description of the nature of the participants and ethical considerations. Following the section of role of researcher, the study described the procedures of data collection and data analysis. Upon the description of methodological assumptions and limitations, establishing credibility was presented.

Description of Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research is a systematic and subjective approach used to describe life experiences and to understand phenomena in a natural environment. Qualitative designs do not attempt to control variables within the research setting (Humphris, 1999), but aim for real, valid, deep, and rich data (Shih, 1998). Walker (1999) agrees that the profound strength of the qualitative approach is its descriptive power, which is useful when the research question pertains to understanding a particular phenomenon or event about which little is known. Similarly, Polit & Hungler (1999) articulate that by providing first-hand knowledge of the problems, qualitative research is intended to understand an issue or social setting and not necessarily to make predictions about the situation.

The focus of a qualitative approach is to understand processes rather than outcomes, and to explore how people create meaning out of the events that happen around them (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1996), qualitative researchers are more interested in the quality of a particular activity, than in how often it occurs; they are concerned not only about what happens, but how it happens.

Regarding data collection, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) point out that the data collected for this type of research is primarily in the form of words or pictures which are used to describe situations and events in great detail rather than numbers. In a similar vein, Fraenkel and Wallen (1996) support that data collection can involve interview transcripts, field notes, audio recording diaries, personal comments, memos, and anything else which conveys the actual words or actions of people. With respect to data analysis, qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively (Fraenkel & Wallen).

Overall, the goal of qualitative research is not to generalize the results to other similar settings, but rather to develop an understanding of general social processes (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Rather than having a hypothesis beforehand and then confirming it, qualitative researchers tend to play it as it goes (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). This study intended to explore the full-time graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness, and, therefore, the flexible design of qualitative research was implemented as it allows for an emergent process which changes with the results. It allowed me to ask open-ended and broad questions, which enabled the participants to share their views about the problems being studied in their own words (Creswell, 2002, p. 145).

Rationale for Research Design

Grounded theory is a qualitative research method that was developed in the 1960s by two Sociologists named Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. It is "a systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or interaction about a substantive topic" (Creswell, 2002, p. 439). Creswell considers this theory as a process, the central element of which is to generate or discover a theory, which relates to a particular situation. He further indicates that

grounded theorists proceed through systematic procedures of collecting data, identifying themes, connecting these themes, and formulating a theory, which expounds the process or phenomenon.

In a grounded theory approach, researchers advance tentative hypotheses, organize categories and theories about the topic they are investigating, while simultaneously collecting data. They pause regularly in the research process to decide which themes to pursue, what data to collect, which emerging hypotheses to test, and when to change direction. There is no predetermined ending point to the research activities. It is the grounded theorist who makes a decision when the investigation has become saturated with sufficient data (Brookfield, 1991, p. 33-34).

Olivares (2003) stresses that “the definition of teacher effectiveness should be grounded in theory, which should specify what is meant by teacher effectiveness, how teacher effectiveness is related to other constructs, and how teacher effectiveness is related to specific observable behaviors” (p. 235). Thus, the grounded theory design seems to be an appropriate type of research for this study. The aim of this study was to generate theory about the full-time graduate students’ perceptions of teacher effectiveness, which is grounded in or based upon the data collected. This study commenced with a broad research question that provided the freedom and flexibility to explore the phenomenon in depth (Ertmer, 1997). It was followed by an explanation of a “basic social process”, in which this procedure involved comparison of incident to incident, incident to category, and category to category. The research resulted in building a theory, and discussing the relations among various themes (Creswell, 2002, p. 445).

Selection of Participants

In my study, a relatively small and purposive sample was chosen and investigated in depth. A random sample may not provide a group of people who are convenient, available, and suited to the intent of the study (Patton, 1990). Also, a random sample from all the graduate students could not guarantee that they are willing to participate in this study, and that they have taken enough courses to enrich their perceptions of teacher effectiveness at the graduate level.

In the recruitment process, I used two possible methods to locate the participants. One was to send an e-mail version of the invitation (see Appendix A) to graduate students with whom I previously took courses. The other was to use the snowball method of sampling (Patton, 1990), which means that participants may identify other students interested in this study. There were three basic criteria on which the final selection process was based. First, they were available to participate in the study during the time when the data collection was conducted from December 2004 to March 2005. Next, they were willing to share their experiences as a graduate student, and their perceptions of effective teachers without fear of being recognized as participants. Third, a minimum level of experience in the courses was required, which restricted the sample to those who had completed at least two full-time terms so that students had become sufficiently familiar with staff in order to make informative judgments and comments.

An attempt was made to include participants from both sexes: four females and four males. All of my participants were white and full-time graduate students. Some of them had completed the Master of Education degree, while others were working toward the fulfillment of their research projects.

In addition, all participants who contributed to this study possessed characteristics which were suggested by Panasuk and Lebaron (1999) as follows: they held widely varied backgrounds of formal education and work experience; they had developed their own educational philosophy about teaching and learning; and they had formulated strong assumptions about modern schooling based on their prior experience as students and professionals. Most of them had been involved in education as school teachers, college instructors, consultants, or administrators. Driven by strong motives, some of them were dissatisfied with their present careers; some longed for self-fulfillment in education; some sought to become effective lifelong learners. Accordingly, it is not surprising that their learning was purposeful and closely akin to previous experiences (p. 357).

Ethical Considerations

I planned and conducted all research activities in compliance with guidelines set by the Brock University Ethics Research Committee. To ensure that participants were properly informed, all participants were provided with information prior to the initial interview, in the form of a Letter of Information (see Appendix B) and an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix C). These written disclosures regarding the nature of the research, which included the purposes of the study, methods of data collection and data analysis, assurances of confidentiality, and the use of the participants' responses and comments as data for the study, were distributed to protect the welfare and dignity of the research participants. These documents were signed by the participants and the researcher before the initial interview took place. Both researcher and participant held copies of each document for acknowledgement purposes and future reference.

To protect anonymity and confidentiality, the one-to-one interviews were carried out in a discreet location, where other individuals were excluded. In addition to a self-selected pseudonym in all reports, all information obtained from the participants was maintained in confidentiality and was not communicated or shared in conversations or written documents. Furthermore, prior to conducting the interview, participants were aware and assured that they had to select pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and confidentiality when they mentioned the names of the instructors and the courses. I was the only person with access to the raw data and aware of the names and corresponding pseudonyms of the participants. For confidentiality of data, all paper data, audiotapes, and electronic data were stored in a secure location known only to myself. In terms of the final disposal, all data would be destroyed three years after the completion of the thesis.

To prevent any physical and/or emotional harm to the participants, they were made aware of their right to withdraw from the research at any time without need for explanation of doing so; they were assured that they would not be penalized in their regular course of study in any way. In short, this study did not intend to mentally stress the participants, but attempted to make the experience as pleasant and beneficial as possible.

To ensure the trustworthiness of data and to provide knowledge of the findings, I supplied participants with transcripts as well as the interpretation and summary of the transcript analysis. They were provided opportunities not only to correct or clarify any information regarding the transcript itself, but also to comment on my initial analysis. A final summary report of the study was mailed or e-mailed to the interested participants.

Role of the Researcher

The qualitative researcher must create awareness that such research is very time consuming, and must, therefore, be patient during the data collection and data analysis of the study. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) refer to qualitative researchers as being enthusiastic seekers, patient listeners, perspicacious observers, positive communicators, skillful collectors, and critical analyzers.

Being a student at the graduate level, I had the privilege to contribute to the development of the research questions. After reviewing the related literature on teacher effectiveness and adult education, general open-ended questions for the initial interview were developed. I began the interview with a short introduction of the study, and then proceeded with my questioning. I tried to wait for natural breaks in the discussion before introducing the next question. During the interview, aside from noting main points for field notes and observing participants' non-verbal behaviors, my involvement remained minimal. Nonetheless, a grounded theory procedure does not minimize the role of the researcher in the process. Indeed, the researcher makes decisions about the categories throughout the process; brings certain questions to the data, along with a "store of sociological concepts"; and brings values, experiences, as well as priorities into the study (Creswell, 2002, p. 446).

It is important to note that, as the graduate student and researcher, I had a very privileged position when conducting this study. Participants commented that there did exist a level of trust and rapport between the researcher and themselves, which enabled them to feel comfortable in openly sharing their views and opinions. However, questioning was carefully designed so as not to impose my perspectives or framework

upon the participants. In addition, I was aware that my perceptions should not influence the data collection, data analysis, and research findings.

Data Collection and Recording

In this section, I outlined the three methods used to collect data: one-on-one interviewing, recording field notes, and writing a research journal. I described how each method contributed to the data and also discussed some of the complexities involved with these methods of data collection.

Interview

The rationale of utilizing the interview. While reviewing the related literature on teacher effectiveness, I recognized that most researchers collected data by using surveys and questionnaires. Tagamori and Bishop (1995) analyzed 200 questionnaires employed by accredited schools in the U.S. and found out that more than 75% of the items were subjective, confusing, and obscure. The standard evaluation survey or questionnaire comprises of a set of close-ended items, which basically depend on the assumption that the items can be evaluated objectively by all respondents. Nevertheless, the researcher's predetermined views may not necessarily be shared by respondents who have their own perspectives (Derry, 1979). It is not surprising that students often "fill out the evaluation form quickly and mechanically, making few distinctions in scores among the specific and global items" (Kolitch & Dean, 1998, p. 134).

In addition, most standard questionnaires gather information about the conventional classroom and teacher-centred methods (Centra, 1993; D' Apollonia & Abrami, 1997; McKeachie, 1997). They fail to focus on some active concepts of learning, which adults

prefer, such as self-directed learning, role-playing, collaborative learning, and project-based learning (Kember & Wong, 2002).

If using surveys or questionnaires to investigate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness is problematic, alternatives must be found to tackle this problem. The interview method is an effective and feasible one. Janesick (1998) conceives interviewing as "a meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic" (p. 30). Interviewing, as the essential source of data is "one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 645). When asked to specify the attitudes, behaviors, and pedagogical practices that they view as the most important to good teaching or effective instruction, students generate their own categories of responses to determine the criteria of effective teaching (Donaldson et al., 1993).

Pre-interview activities. In order to maintain confidentiality, I sent an e-mail version of the invitation (see Appendix A) respectively to eight of my former classmates who had completed the Master of Education program or who were approaching fulfillment of this program. In this electronic letter, I provided the rationale and purpose of this study, interview questions I might ask them, as well as my contact information. Five of them replied to me promptly, showing their interest to participate. Three of them were unsure that they would be available during the time the data was collected. Fortunately, those who could not participate recommended qualified colleagues who were willing to take part in this study.

Prior to the initial interview, I sent each participant the Letter of Information (see Appendix B) and the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix C) to inform them of the study in detail. Participants were told that they did not have to answer questions that they felt were invasive. Participants were also notified that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. I gained a deeper understanding of the individuals and developed rapport with participants by talking with them personally before each interview and communicating with them informally via telephone or e-mail.

Conducting the interview. Qualitative interviews include a variety of forms, ranging from structured, to semi-structured, to unstructured. In the initial interviews which I used to establish rapport with participants and gather themes, my interview techniques (see Appendix D) were unstructured (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). I utilized the six basic types of questions described by Patton (1990) to guide my initial interview process: the background or demographic question, the knowledge question, the opinion or values question, the experience or behavior question, and the feeling or sensory question. Instead of providing participants with a list of response options, I wanted participants to generate their own answers based on their situated experiences (Creswell, 2002). In the post-interviews, which I used to validate information and elaborate on recurring themes, I employed semi-structured questions, which were built upon the themes emerged in the initial interviews. Consequently, as shown in Appendix E, the follow-up interview questions for each participant were different.

In a successful interview, the researcher conducts the interview in an openly interactive manner. The participants should be at ease without fear of being evaluated. It is crucial that the researcher be aware not to change the participants' views, but to learn

what their opinions are and why they are such. However, my struggle throughout the interviewing process was how to contribute my voice to the interview dialogues without affecting the participants' responses. My wish, as Harrison, MacGibbon and Morton (2001) suggest, was to become part of the interview dialogue in more ways than simply saying "Uh, huh", as a response. Therefore, I chose my words carefully without influencing the participants' viewpoints. I also found it important to be flexible in terms of the order of questions, to allow the development of a more natural conversation, rather than being constrained by a structured agenda. To ensure that all the questions were asked, I had a printed copy of the questions for each interview and put a check mark beside each question as it was asked. Probing questions were asked based on the participants' responses to the prepared questions, and irrelevant questions were avoided.

Post-interview activities. All the interviews required approximately 40-60 minutes per session and took place in a quiet setting at a convenient time established by each participant. All interviews were audiotaped from the very beginning to the end to assist me in transcribing and coding the data. After all the initial interviews were finished, I transcribed the interview tapes. I listened to the tapes carefully and compared the transcripts to the tapes in order to ensure accuracy and to become more familiar with the participants' intentions. I provided the participants with copies of the transcripts and a summary of initial data analysis for member checking. Member checking was also used to rephrase the themes and comments, and to probe for more complete meanings so as to clarify and/or expand on key ideas that emerged in the interviews. When member checking was completed, an Appreciation Feedback Letter (see Appendix F) was sent to each participant to thank them for volunteering in the study.

Field Notes

Recording field notes was another aspect of the interview process. As a source of data, field notes contributed to my understanding of the interview data. Tesch (1990) suggests that the researcher should reflect upon the data as they are collected, record initial thoughts, and make analytical notes, or memos.

The field from which my notes were taken encompassed the experiences surrounding the interviews. There were two kinds of field notes. The first, being low inference descriptions, were verbatim accounts of comments and literal descriptions of actions by participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). The second, being high inference notes, included the abstract thoughts that I had. These thoughts included comments used to identify possible themes, interpretations, and questions (McMillan & Schumacher).

While interviewing, I recorded additional information pertaining to the interview experience. Such information included, but was not limited to, a description of the location and time; informal conversations taking place before and after the recording of interviews; gestures, body language, and other non-verbal cues from the participants; key concepts or ideas arising from the dialogue; and personal reminders to return to ideas I wanted to explore further (Sanjek, 1990). However, I found it difficult to take comprehensive and exhaustive field notes when I conducted the interview since I had to observe the participant carefully and consider probing questions. Therefore, I elaborated on the field notes in the memos immediately following the interview. As these were my observations and feelings, they were separated from the actual interview data, noted in the margins of the transcribed data, and highlighted in a special-colored ink.

Journal

As an additional source of data collection, a reflection research journal was kept throughout the research process to elaborate on ideas about the data and coded categories, and to provide an in-depth and richer view of this study. The purpose of writing the research journal in this study was to afford a method to document my “intellectual and methodological journey” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 43), to provide me with a concrete representation of my thoughts, ideas, assumptions, and experiences. As such, Creswell (2002) states that the research journals help direct the inquirer toward new sources of data, shape which ideas to develop further, and prevent paralysis from mountains of data. In terms of the format, the research journals could be long or short; detailed or abstract.

I recorded my reflections on various aspects of the research process, including my understanding of reading the relevant literature, instruction from my supervisor, insights sparked by people with whom I discussed my thesis, summaries based on speaking with participants, ideas emerged from the interview and field notes data, and major themes I wanted to explore further. More generally, I used a research journal to record what I did, what I learned, what feelings I possessed, how I conquered difficulties, and where I was in the study. In these journals, I was able to voice my feelings, concerns, predicament, and impressions. I was able to openly confess difficulties, smooth over the conflicts, revamp my ideas, and deal with my own prejudices. As Bogdan and Biklen (1992) remark, a researcher must be self-reflective and must keep an accurate record of methods and procedures in order to perform a good study.

Data Processing and Analysis

Porter (1996) notes that qualitative work is inductive. Theories and propositions are formed at the end of the research process, and are generated from the analysis of the data. An inductive interpretation and analysis of data starting with minute details and working up into larger themes is the premise behind qualitative research (Creswell, 2002). Although the Systematic Design for grounded theory is a widely used data analysis method in educational research, the required steps (open, axial, and selective coding) are not suitable for this study. It is important to let a theory emerge from the data rather than using specific pre-set categories (Glaser, 1992). As a consequence, upon completion of the first interviews, I set out on the difficult task of data analysis and interpretation by using the Emerging Design, which intended to generate categories, refine the categories into fewer and fewer categories, compare data with emerging categories, and write a theory of several processes (Creswell).

Following Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) suggestion, I took a break after the data collection phase to renew enthusiasm and mull over new ideas. My first step upon returning to my study was to reacquaint myself with the data by reading through all the interview transcripts, field notes, and researcher journals to obtain a general sense of the content.

I started coding data from each initial interview. While reading each interview transcript, I identified a list of recurring words or phrases and then shortened them by combining similar forms of the same concept (e.g., *enthusiasm* was combined with *enthusiastic*; *good relationship* was merged with *good rapport with students*). These statistically significant statements were culled and coded with key words so that they

could be identified easily as data analysis progressed. Though the topic for each individual session was sometimes vastly different from one another, most elements were inextricably connected to the larger themes that were uncovered in this study. In subsequent analysis, similar types of data were organized into 19 clusters or categories. I then looked for links between categories, and further clustering of similar categories was performed in order to provide themes and patterns. No attempt was made to categorize each and every statement into a limited number of categories, considering that the process was more in line with seeking important conceptual insights. Evidence for each theme was based on several viewpoints from different individuals. Specific citations and quotations selected for this study were those which represented significant constructs of commonly identified themes. After the codes were collapsed to seven major themes through the process of eliminating repeated codes, the codes were organized into a classification system.

A tentative identification of themes and patterns that emerged in the initial interviews was developed to determine whether other avenues of questioning should be addressed in the post-interviews. After all the post-interviews were conducted, the data analysis stages were repeated as described above, so that old themes were confirmed and enriched, new themes were discovered and discussed, and new relations among themes were connected and compared.

The field notes and the reflection journals that I kept over the duration of the study were reread. Useful data were highlighted that provided the study with any valuable information, such as observations of nonverbal responses made by the participants, personal and professional thoughts, feelings, and assessments, as well as any positive

connections that could be made between the participants and myself. These additional sources were garnered and added to enrich and supplement the pool of analyzed data.

Finally, I looked for the negative evidence, which refers to searching for discrepant incidents which may yield insights to enable the researcher to modify emerging patterns. In order to accomplish this, constructed data were displayed. It is well known that figures, flow charts, and matrices can assist in understanding complicated information. A visual representation that is accompanied by descriptive contextual data can be helpful in simplifying complex data, illuminating a concept, and communicating clearly. In this study, I utilized a data display for those purposes. I created two tables and one figure to aid me to effectively crystallize the data and organize my own thoughts.

Methodological Assumptions

There was a set of methodological assumptions evident in this study. First, it was assumed that students know what they need from their instructors (Chonko, Tanner, & Davis, 2002, p. 271), and they are not biased in their judgment, so they feel confident to state their authentic perceptions.

Second, qualitative research lends to a certain amount of anxiety in the interviewer and participants, since interviews are conducted between two unfamiliar people. This study, therefore, assumed that participants would feel comfortable enough to provide sincere and unambiguous responses, which allowed me to identify common perspectives on teacher effectiveness (Kolitch & Dean, 1998, p. 124).

Furthermore, the main assumption, critical to this process, is that any information that the individuals had shared with me was honest and that they had not been operating under a hidden agenda of their own. It was, therefore, imperative that all interviewees

understand that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that their responses would remain confidential.

In addition, I was both the researcher and a graduate student, so it was extremely important that I did not allow this prior relationship to, in any way, psychologically affect the participants by judgments, comments, and evaluations. I could not allow my power as a graduate student to influence this study's participants, procedures, or findings.

Research Limitation

Several limitations inherent in this study need to be discussed. First, qualitative methods of gleaning and interpreting data were limited by the lack of precision, clarity, and systemization of quantitative measurement. This often raises concern regarding the face validity of the data. However, the intended outcome of qualitative research is not the generalization of results but a deeper understanding of experience from the perspectives of the participants.

The purposeful sampling of participants was another potential limitation in the study, as a different group of participants might have resulted in a different perspective on the same issues. Consequently, it must be recognized that, although the results of this study may be useful for evaluating teacher effectiveness from the full-time students' perspectives at the graduate level, the findings cannot be generalized beyond this population. Moreover, the participants came from a small homogeneous group, which may limit the applicability of the results to other academic environments. Further studies may expend upon the results of my research to examine their effect in other academic environments.

Furthermore, another possible limitation was the interview process. Some of the participants were those who had not yet completed their program. They may be apprehensive to fully divulge their true perceptions due to the fear of being recognized. During the interview, the participant may feel uncomfortable in the presence of audio-taping equipment and may experience some anxiety in spite of the researcher's efforts to promote a welcoming and respectful environment.

Last, I was the only one to code the data and to determine categories. It is possible that I overlooked some less important details. Since every piece of research, both quantitative and qualitative, involves an element of subjectivity, it was important for me to take appropriate measures to minimize subjective intrusion into the analyses (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Thus, I offered the participants the opportunity to view and discuss their respective data following my analysis in order to gain multiple viewpoints and comparisons. Additionally, the level of analysis is another potential limitation of this study. The data for this study were analyzed at the level of the researcher although the data were collected from multiple resources. The preceding limitations lead to a call for future research that uses large, multi-sectional data to replicate the present findings (Arthur et al., 2003, p. 283).

Establishing Credibility

In an attempt to establish credibility, a few procedures were involved in the study. First of all, I kept recording as much as I could, whether it seemed important or not (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). I audio-taped the interviews, took field notes during/after the interviews, and kept up the research journals throughout my study. When listening to the

tapes, I read and reread the transcripts carefully to make sure there was no discrepancy between them.

Second, triangulation is an important and powerful approach used to establish the credibility of a qualitative research study. Across multiple sources, triangulation is a well-respected technique in research (Kember & Kelly, 1993). It refers to the use of multiple methods to measure a single construct and has been defined as the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods, or investigators in one study of a single phenomenon (Denzin, 1970). Creswell (2002) describes triangulation as the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, as well as a form of cross-validation that seeks regularities in the data by comparing different participants, comments, setting, and methods to identify recurring results. Therefore, triangulation was utilized in this study when collecting three sources of data, namely: (a) interviews; (b) field notes; and (c) research journals. This allowed me to ensure that the study was accurate due to the fact that the information was not drawn from a single source.

Last, but not least, the procedures used to ensure the credibility of results included member checking, which were informal checks and discussion of the results with participants. The participants were given the opportunity to read over the content of interviews and encouraged to make changes, suggestions, additions, and adjustments to analysis in order to ensure the accuracy of the data.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the full-time graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. The flexible design of grounded theory of qualitative research was utilized in this study. It allowed me to ask open-ended questions which enabled the

participants to share their views, and thus provide real, valid, deep, and rich data. Eight participants of both sexes were chosen purposefully. All the research activities complied with guidelines set by the Brock University Ethics Research Committee. Such activities were implemented to inform the participants of the study, to protect anonymity and confidentiality, and to ensure the trustworthiness of data. As a qualitative researcher, I was an enthusiastic seeker, patient listener, perspicacious observer, positive communicator, skillful collector, and critical analyzer throughout the study. The three methods used to collect and record the data were one-on-one interviewing, the taking of field notes, and the writing of research journals. In the data analysis process, the Emerging Design was utilized to generate categories, refine the categories into fewer and fewer categories, compare data with emerging categories, and compose a theory. Under Methodological Assumptions, I pinpointed the assumptions pertaining to the nature of the study and the participation of the interviewees. Research limitations were outlined to point out the possibilities which may affect the validity and reliability of this study. In the final section of this chapter, I described several strategies, such as triangulation and member checking, which were implemented to enhance the credibility of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In this chapter, the findings of this study were summarized. Grounded theory generated by the study was revealed. The data were organized and divided into four sections. In the first section, the importance of teacher effectiveness along with the definition and measure of teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives was briefly presented. Table 4 exhibits each participant's perception of teacher effectiveness in terms of importance, dimensions, and the teacher's role. In the second section, seven major dimensions of teacher effectiveness were identified in light of the interview data in accordance with the field notes and journals. Within each major theme, several subthemes were discussed to support the main idea. Table 5 shows the composition of each dimension and distribution of participants' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. The third section presented the analysis of the relation between personality and teacher effectiveness. It also explored the relation between research involvement and teacher effectiveness. In the last section, the chapter summary and conclusion were provided including a model of the dimensions of teacher effectiveness generated from graduate students' perspectives in this study.

Importance of Teacher Effectiveness

As shown in Table 4, teacher effectiveness is dramatically important because "it can motivate students' willingness to work harder and to learn more, so that students become more effective learners and apply what they learn into future situations" (Journal, Feb. 23, 2004). The following comments exhibit the importance of teacher effectiveness from the different perspectives of participants.

Table 4

Participants' Profile and Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Name	Age	Importance	Dimensions	Teachers' Roles
Lois	25~30	-Effective learning process -Apply what students learn into future	-Up to date -Enthusiastic -Knowledgeable -Caring and humanistic -Creative -Adapt to students' needs -Balance course demands -Use various strategies -Motivate students	-Communicator -Mentor -Supervisor
Vicky	25~30	- Motivate students -Students' willingness of learning more	-Enthusiastic for subject matter -Flexible -One-on-one interaction -Bring in personal experience -Balance course demands -Empower students -Motivate students	-Mentor
Clark	25~30	-Passion of students' learning -Reach maximum potential -Become a life-long learner	-Approachable -Enthusiasm about teaching -Co-operative learning atmosphere -Challenge students -Empower students -Bring personal life experiences	-Mediator -Facilitator -Challenger -Role Model -Learner -Cooperator
Peter	30~35	-Student progress	-Flexible -Caring -Presentation skills -High standards -Critical Evaluation -Enthusiasm about teaching	-Leader -Guide
Judy	30~35	-Students work harder -Reach students' goals	-Knowledgeable -Approachable -Caring and respectful -Happy learning environment -Students and professor rapport -Deliver the material effectively -Accurate assessment	-Researcher -Advisor -Friend -Colleague
Tina	50~55	-Effective Learners	-Flexible -Caring -Professional and academic -Relevance of the class material -Empower students/encouragement -Bring a higher level of understanding	-Advisor -Guide -Nurturer -Supporter -Mentor
Bruce	30~35	-Students benefit -Willing to learn	-Creative -Flexible	-Advisor -Co-worker

- Care
- Presentation skills
- Good relationship with students
- Supportive learning environment
- Encourage students\

Luke 25~30 -Students in the right
 direction
 -Work harder

- Flexible
- Caring
- Open-minded
- Share personal experiences
- Empower students
- Encourage students

-Listener

In order to reach their learning goals, students must have effective teachers. As Lois commented:

If you don't have an effective teacher, you won't have an effective student, who can take what they have learned and apply it in different areas....Learning is a process, so if you don't have an effective teacher, the subject matter won't come through, and the entire experience of learning won't be beneficial. (Interview 1, Dec. 13, 2004, p. 2)

Teacher effectiveness provides the student with confidence to be an effective student.

Teacher effectiveness is a catalyst for student learning. Vicky believed that "it can make or break a student's interest in learning and affect whether or not they're going to care about the subject and be excited about learning" (Interview 1, Dec. 14, 2004, p. 1). Similarly, Bruce mentioned that students who are willing to learn will benefit because "they'll want to work, ask questions, be interested [in learning], and prevent boredom" (Bruce, Interview 1, Jan. 18, 2005, p. 2). In addition, Peter ensured that the ineffective teacher demoralizes students.

If I saw the teacher as being kind of ineffective, or he or she did not get my respect, then my motivation went down. As I was writing the papers, I wasn't putting as much work into it, and therefore not learning as much as I would have. (Interview 1, Dec. 20, p. 2)

Teacher effectiveness helps "lead or guide the students in the right direction" (Luke, Interview 1, Jan. 25, 2005, p. 1). Without it, "students will continue to jump through loops, to get their degree....Teachers have to be challenging themselves to not only bring something different to the classroom, but bring the best out of students" (Clark, Interview 1, Dec. 13, 2005, p. 1). Accordingly, "students need that extra bit of reassurance or that

extra bit of guidance” (Judy, Interview 1, Jan. 6, 2005, p. 2) to work on the right track towards their learning goals.

It is interesting to note that Peter had opposing opinions on the importance of teacher effectiveness. Although he agreed that teacher effectiveness is vital to student learning, he was also aware that “it’s not the most important because for adult learners, we are responsible for our own learning....The point is we can always learn, even from a bad teacher, especially in education because we can learn what ineffective teaching is” (Interview 1, pp. 2-3).

Definition and Measure of Teacher Effectiveness

In terms of defining and measuring teacher effectiveness, the findings of this study parallel the reviewed literature in that there are diverse opinions regarding this issue. The participants offered a broad range of ideas, comments, and suggestions with respect to the topic of this study. Without a doubt, the task of defining and measuring teacher effectiveness is a rigorous one, and given its history, there will be no immediate resolution. One participant suggested that “we are always growing and changing, and we don’t really know the effectiveness of what we have until we are confronted with it” (Tina, Interview 1, p. 7). Defining and measuring teacher effectiveness is also very subjective; that is, “what one thinks may be effective, somebody else might totally disagree with” (Field notes, Jan. 7, 2005). Additionally, “students’ diverse perceptions of teacher effectiveness due to their educational philosophy, individual needs, and learning styles contribute to this multidimensionality of defining and measuring teacher effectiveness” (Journal, Sep. 30, 2004). As a consequence, there is no commonly agreed definition and measurement. “We cannot measure teacher effectiveness in the sense of putting numbers

to it” (Judy, Interview 1, p. 2); “we cannot deem teachers’ own styles which don’t suit us to be ineffective” (Field notes, Dec. 20, 2005).

Overview of Definition and Measure of Teacher effectiveness

Despite the difficult task of defining and measuring teacher effectiveness, there are some major characteristics (see Table 4) which are valued and utilized by graduate students on teacher evaluation.

The teacher is considered to be effective if he or she has an excellent command of subject matter, uses a variety of strategies to motivate students, and has a good relationship with students. The following comments support these ideas.

The effective teacher is someone who is knowledgeable, not only about the subject matter, but how the students in their classroom learn; someone who motivates the students, who makes things interesting for them to learn, and who understands them. So not only someone who is an expert in the specific area, but someone who can relate to the students, and give them something that they can take away with them for the future. (Lois, Interview 1, p. 1)

Similarly, Vicky added:

A teacher is effective if they’re able to get you excited about what they are teaching, because that makes you want to look into it more and to be excited about your work....A teacher is effective if she or he is able to meet with the students one on one and understand where they’re at. (Interview 1, p. 1)

As well, Judy emphasized the importance for a teacher to be knowledgeable and caring. “They should not only have a lot of knowledge of the literature that surrounds the topic,

but also some life experience that relates the topic....There should be a sense of care in their teaching” (Interview 1, p. 1).

Furthermore, empowering students and being creative were deemed by some participants as significant factors of effective teachers. Clark indicated that “an effective teacher has to be able to empower their students, challenge the students to think critically about issues, and inspire students to seek their own interests and passions” (Interview 1, p. 1). Similarly, Luke perceived an effective teacher as someone who “is able to target all students; let everyone have a voice” (Interview 1, p. 1). Regarding creativity, Bruce mentioned that teachers should be creative to develop innovative activities and promote spontaneous discussion to feed various students’ needs (Interview 1, p. 1).

Roles of the Instructor

In addition to the attributes of effective teachers mentioned above, the participants also consciously put a heavy emphasis on the multiple roles (see Table 4) that the instructor should play to enhance teacher effectiveness. The instructor at the graduate level is not only a teacher, but also an advisor, a guide, a role model, a facilitator, a co-worker, and a researcher. “Other than teaching, they have a lot of other hats to wear, and they have a lot of jobs to do to help students reach their maximum potentials” (Journal, July 20, 2004).

Advisor. At the graduate school level, “it is essential that you have someone who you can go along with and ask questions to and refer to” (Vicky, Interview 1, p. 2). Lois also agreed:

Having someone, like a mentor you can speak with, makes such a difference. That not only motivated me to keep on going, but I had a greater interest for my studies,

knowing that somebody was there cheering for me along the way, and giving me continual encouragement and feedback. (Interview 1, p. 4)

When commenting on a good experience she had at the graduate level, Tina remarked:

One of the best experiences as a graduate student was the professor told us the best way to get your master's degree is to think about your topic early. That was the best advice, because once I decided what I wanted to do a thesis on, I then chose my curriculum to meet my needs. (Interview 1, p. 2)

Tina was also very grateful to her thesis advisor for helping her overcome academic and emotional obstacles.

A thesis is such a personal adventure....The challenge is to keep the emotion and the academic balanced. It takes expertise of the professors to help find the balance....We all need nurturing and support and mentoring to feel we can do this. I felt my advisor handled that with such compassion and understanding as well as maintaining a high level of academia to the exercise. (Interview 1, p. 9)

Guide. Instead of assuming that the student is capable to successfully manage the self-directed learning, the instructor needs to become a leader to guide students to promote a higher level of learning. As Peter complained “I was intimidated going into the program, because I thought that professors would probably leave me to be much more independent and give me less guidance about what I'm supposed to do” (Interview 1, p. 5). Tina also addressed this issue, “although there is some independent learning that goes on, there should be some nurturing or guidance to help us grow...not just reiterate what we already know” (Interview 1, p. 4).

Role Model. Instructors who make a point to role model their theories, who “walk the talk” (Tina, Interview 1, p. 3) are effective. Such a concern was also confirmed by Clark’s following statement.

A teacher’s actions sometimes speak louder than words, and when you can role model or you can live out your values and your teaching philosophy, your students are able to capture the main point or the spirit of content...the learning becomes deeper, insightful, and long term. (Interview 1, p. 2)

Facilitator. The effective instructor is also a facilitator in class, as Clark mentioned that “a teacher has to be an effective mediator or facilitator of class discussion to be able to challenge students to think outside of the box and to bring holistic and global perspectives to their discussions” (Interview 1, p. 2).

Co-worker. At the graduate level, students see an instructor more as a colleague, since “you’re not only a student, you’re also a researcher, so you can kind of step into their shoes and understand this is what research is all about (Judy, Interview 1, p. 4). Students can also approach an instructor as a co-worker, as “you have an advisor that you work with....It’s a working relationship. In this case, you’re creating and sharing your own ideas” (Bruce, Interview 1, p. 3). Consequently, it is essential to treat students as intellectual equals. “Even though instructors may have many years’ of teaching experiences and rich life experiences, it is fair and democratic to at least provide the opportunity for student discussion, and to respect the equality in terms of input and insight” (Journal, March 15, 2005).

All in all, despite the fact that teacher effectiveness is undoubtedly crucial to student learning, it is not easy to define and measure teacher effectiveness due to the

multidimensionality of teaching and learning, as well as the subjectivity of measuring it. However, students assure that teachers at the graduate level should play different roles based on students' needs in varied contexts; there are certain dimensions of teacher effectiveness which students appreciate and to which teachers should aspire. In the following section, seven main dimensions (see Table 5) of teacher effectiveness were addressed in detail.

Good Command of Subject Matter

Although a teacher should play different roles, the most important one is to teach. Such a fundamental role requires that the teacher should be adequately knowledgeable to deliver the teaching content; in other words, the teacher must be familiar with the teaching materials and have a good command of subject matter.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of the participants in this research had a good impression on their instructors' content knowledge and breadth of coverage. "They were all pretty knowledgeable about their subject matter; they all seemed genuinely interested in their subject area, and they had gone somewhere and done certain studies, and they all shared their own research with us" (Vicky, Interview 1, p. 5). "As far as knowing the research, they are very knowledgeable...they know their literature" (Clark, Interview 2, March 9, 2005, p. 3).

It is interesting to note that Peter had a different perspective regarding this issue. He mentioned that, occasionally, it is difficult to differentiate whether or not an instructor has a good command of the subject matter.

I don't know if the professor had the knowledge about the subject matter because these two in particular didn't really try to show that they did....Neither one gave me the impression that they knew very much beyond what was in the core textbook because they chose not to....so your assumption is they are not. (Interview 1, p. 3)

Although instructors may have a good command of subject matter in certain specific areas, they must carry on their professional development. Judy believed that "the professor should have a strong background, so basically they read the literature on the topic and do some research on it and develop the topic they are interested in". She judged that the instructor must continually be learning. "Just because they have a good [command of] subject matter, or a good knowledge base beyond the subject matter doesn't mean that it's time to move on to something else, but rather there should be a continual flow of learning" (Interview 1, p. 3). A similar comment was made by Lois.

Issues are always changing in society, and in order to be an effective teacher and role model for your students, you have to be up to date on all sorts of information, not only on your subject content, but relating it to current issues in the media, trying to address everything that's happening currently and relating it to your subject matter. (Interview 2, March 21, 2005, p. 1)

To sum up, "being knowledgeable about the content, being up to date on information, and establishing a high level of excellence" (Lois, Interview 1, p. 5) enhance teacher competency.

Presentation Skills

A teacher who is well educated is not necessarily an effective teacher. He or she must know how to present knowledge to students. Thus having good presentation skills is

another essential factor of being an effective teacher. There is no surprise to note that it was one of the most frequently mentioned factors (see Table 5) by the participants in this study.

Multidimensionality

Basically, the course delivery is beneficial to students if it is clear in content, organized in structure, and interesting in format (Journal, Sep, 12, 2004). However, teachers come to the class with individual techniques and various characteristics of teaching; students on the other hand, come from different backgrounds and cultures with diverse learning styles and needs. This multidimensionality of teaching and learning somewhat elucidates the inconsistency of students' perceptions of effective presentation skills. For instance, students would learn from an instructor "who was very organized and had all of the notes and had the course paced out" (Peter, Interview 1, p. 5), because "you admire his or her professionalism, so you are receptive to what they say" (Peter, Interview 1, p. 1). Conversely, students would learn from an instructor who "was disorganized and would start talking about something that was a little bit off track", but the instructor's enthusiasm of teaching may positively influence the student's passion of learning (Peter, Interview 1, p. 5). As well, Tina's story demonstrated this discrepancy. When speaking of one specific course, in which the professor did a lot of lecturing, she commented:

I am so happy to have such an academic lecturer, because there are very few people who can lecture and really make it interesting to me....That class went so fast because I loved it so much....The other students found him particularly boring. (Interview 1, pp. 8-9)

Accordingly, when a graduate student perceives an instructor as effective, “it is not because this instructor is better than another; it is more so because students give more credit to teachers whose teaching styles fit their own learning styles” (Field notes, Aug.15, 2004).

Importance of Presence

The predominant issue asserted by the majority of the participants regarding presentation skills is *presence*. From the student perspective, the instructor’s *presence* in the classroom, and the way in which he/she delivers the course material have a direct impact on an instructor’s ability to be an effective teacher.

An instructor’s lack of presence in the classroom was a disappointment for Peter, who claimed that “one professor relied too much on student presentations and she didn't give us the impression that she was familiar enough with the core material of the course” (Interview 1, p. 1). “They did very little lecturing. And they more or less left it to students to take over the class with all presentations” (Peter, Interview 2, March 7, 2005, p. 3). Peter suggested that, in an effort to gain the attention and respect of the students, instructors should initially establish themselves through “a lot of lectures, presentations”. He further commented that “they should share their views about whatever the topic is of the course, the key ideas in the course” before diving into “presentation after presentation” (Interview 1, p. 1).

Bruce spoke positively of his experience with an instructor who conveyed this *presence* in the classroom. “He will stop the presentation and offer input. I think that’s entirely necessary, ‘cause although our classmates’ input is necessary, we are here to learn from someone who has the experience” (Interview 2, March, 16, 2005, p. 3).

Lois offered a slightly different perspective in which she believed that, at the graduate level, there should be a sense of balance between the teacher's presence and the student's presence in class. She mentioned that "we were more the instruments of learning and we facilitated our own learning process through group work, through presentations....I felt that it was more like a self-learning environment, which is what graduate education is supposed to be". At the same time, the teacher's presence is an indispensable component of an effective class. "It is also nice to have them teach us, because it's a dual process; we learn from doing but we also learn from hearing their experiences as well" (Interview 2, p. 2).

The Effective Approach to Present

Due to the multidimensional nature of adult teaching and the varied characteristics of adult learners, it is a contentious issue to decide which approach the instructor should use to present successfully in class. However, students have expressed predilection for specific presentation skills, which entail such qualities as enthusiasm, creativity, and sharing experiences. The subsequent student voices reiterated these concerns.

Enthusiastic vs boring. Enthusiasm or passion can make a huge difference in teaching and learning. "Because she was so passionate about it, she brought this dry, uninteresting topic to life" (Peter, Interview 1, p. 5). "The classes just went by so fast for me because I found them so interesting, so innovative" (Judy, Interview 1, p. 3).

It is not surprising that a lack of enthusiasm in the teaching process leads to a lack of passion in the learning process. As in the following example, Vicky was so displeased with her instructor's teaching style that she ended up dropping the course.

The teacher was quite, quite boring, and he just sat at the front of the room and he would just read in a monotone voice....He would just point to us for answers to these questions or things about the article. We would just sit there and his voice never changed, he never moved in his chair....I didn't learn anything because I would start to daydream. (Interview 1, p. 6)

Similar to Vicky's experience, Clark also complained that "at a graduate level, when you have a professor who comes into a room, and doesn't make that effort...there's a disappointment, especially when you think that they have a Ph.d title, they should be able to teach" (Interview 1, p. 2).

Lois further supported the importance of enthusiasm as a means of teacher effectiveness. For some students, a teacher's level of enthusiasm towards the subject matter correlates with the student's attitude towards learning.

To be in front of a group of students, they should kind of show a bit more enthusiasm. They can't just be boring and sit up there and kind of spit out the information....Because of the monotone voice, we kind of taught ourselves the course, or like self taught within group work. I wouldn't feel like going to the class....Perhaps a little bit more enthusiasm would have made things a bit more interesting for the rest of us. (Lois, Interview 1, p. 4)

Creative vs routine. An instructor that sticks to a routine method of teaching may reach some students, but it is more likely to lead to a stale and stagnant learning environment. This concern was raised by some of the participants. For instance, Vicky summed up this routine teaching style as follows, "some professors will just start out, you sit, you answer questions, you read something, get into groups, and it's over. The same

thing happens every time” (Interview 1, p. 6). Judy was equally troubled over the mundanity of a routine teaching structure. “I didn't really like the way they delivered the class. It was the same boring lecture style every day....I just found it very monotonous. It was the same thing every day, same formation, same lecture style, same presentation (Interview 1, p. 5).

Instructors have their own unique styles when it comes to presenting course materials. But they must be aware that students come from diverse cultures and backgrounds with various learning styles. Maintaining a habitual teaching method year after year cannot possibly be effective for such a broad scope of learners. Creative teaching methods are essential to the ever-changing needs of learners. As Bruce indicated, “whatever way that they are teaching us, they should find the way that suits us” (Interview 1, p. 6). Lois similarly identified the need for breaking from the norm to combat the monotonous learning environment. She said:

You have to be creative and adapt to the needs of your classroom. Every situation will be different, so what might've worked in one of your classes will totally backfire in another. As a teacher, to be effective you have to be constantly thinking and trying to adapt to the needs of the present situation. (Interview 1, p. 3)

However, finding innovative ways to beat the banality of routine teaching may not be an easy task for some teachers. After all, not everyone is naturally able to be creative. Nevertheless, a slight deviation from the path of tradition sometimes can have a profound effect on the interest level of students and their capacity to learn. The following quotes echo this need for a break from routine and propose some creative teaching methods.

“When you're working with young scholarly adults, you have to break away from routine and challenge yourself to make the learning as engaging as possible, instead of doing the same strategies week after week” (Clark , Interview 1, p. 3). “Effective teachers don't just come in, open up a text book, turn to page 44 and teach. It's someone who has the textbook as a guide but manipulates it and kind of becomes creative and uses different activities” (Bruce, Interview 1, p. 1). Lois believed that, “students might not remember what they have learned in lecture, but they might remember a cool story, a strategy or a group activity that they did in class. That is what they will remember more in the long run” (Interview 1, p. 2). Occasionally, teachers should alter the teaching style and the way they present information. Vicky suggested that “when presenting an article, you may divide students into groups one day; you may discuss it as a class one day; or you may read it independently and present the information on the article yourself one day” (Interview 2, March 31, 2005, p. 1). She also mentioned that bringing in visual aids or assigning small projects to students as alternatives would freshen students’ minds and stimulate their learning initiative (Interview 1, p. 3). Additionally, the use of technology is another significant strategy that should not be ignored. As Clark emphasized:

One thing that I thought was missing was perhaps the lack of the technology within the teaching role of the professors. It is 2005, and teachers need to gear up or step up their presentations and their skills in technology because that’s the direction we are headed; both students and teachers need to feel comfortable with it. (Interview 2, p. 3)

Theoretical vs practical. At the graduate level, there is abundant theoretical knowledge being taught and transmitted from the instructor to the student. The various philosophies and theories increase the student’s comprehension of concepts in specific

areas. However, the student must be able to apply such knowledge to real world situations, because “the purpose of university level education is to prepare people to function properly in society” (Journal, June 11, 2004). In order to fulfill this ultimate goal, “students must be able to exploit their understanding of theoretical knowledge to enhance practice in the workforce” (Journal, July 20, 2004)

There are a number of ways for teachers to guide students to transfer the theoretical knowledge into practical information. One of the preferred methods by students is that teachers bring personal experiences into the classroom, which will benefit students in the following ways.

First of all, sharing experiences can aid students to comprehend an intangible concept or notion more easily. “If they give examples that are real life examples, it’s easier [for me] to understand than just reading the theory and trying to apply it to something new” (Vicky, Interview 1, p. 1). Second, providing personal or life experiences could stimulate the student’s interest and motivation to learn. “They didn’t just teach from the book, they taught from their personal experience, and their own life experience. It’s all very interesting to me” (Peter, Interview 1, p. 6). “They also brought a lot of their background experience into the classroom, and I really like that because I was able to relate to that....It made the class more interesting” (Judy, Interview 1, p. 4). In contrast, when speaking about ineffective teachers, Peter mentioned a negative example.

I don’t remember any stories about their experience, about what they did in their lives as teachers, or as researchers. It seemed to me that they were just preaching from the book. Whatever they said sounded very mechanical to me, which I thought was really frustrating. (Interview 1, p. 6)

Furthermore, the experiences that teachers have had from other domains aid to broaden students' horizon.

If they did some kind of educational programs not only in Canada but worldwide, it kind of gave us a global perspective of education, not only teaching perhaps at the elementary level but maybe the high school or university or college level, that gives us a different perspective also. (Lois, Interview 1, p. 2)

Finally, an instructor that brings personal experiences to the classroom can benefit the student's future career.

I would expect them to have a lot of practical experience in their particular field; I would expect them to be able to pass on different approaches, different styles, different methods that they have determined to be helpful or not, in their own teaching... 'cause most of us will become teachers. (Bruce, Interview 1, p. 2)

With a combination of core course materials and personal insights and experiences, an instructor can enrich the education of graduate students in a way that makes what is learned more practical. However, as one participant suggested, incorporating personal experiences into the classroom must be done with good balance and should add value to learning. "It depends if it's connected to what we are doing or not....I am not so sure if it is always necessary" (Tina, Interview 2, March, 14, 2005, p. 2).

In conclusion, having good presentation skills is a particularly important factor of teacher effectiveness. Effective presentation skills will differ considerably depending on the teacher's teaching style and the student's individual needs. In order to profitably present in class, the teacher may exhibit enthusiasm to prevent boredom; employ creativity to avoid routine; and share personal experiences to deliver practical knowledge.

Challenging and Motivating Students

An instructor may possess an excellent command of subject matter and presentation skills, but students may not always be willing to learn. Therefore, “to challenge and motivate students is an indispensable, persistent, and rewarding process in teaching” (Journal, September 12, 2005). Although a student’s willingness to learn is not solely the teacher’s responsibility, motivating and inspiring them definitely contributes to it.

[The teacher] inspired us to want to work for him and for ourselves, be willing to work, and willing to want to find....He inspired me academically to learn more about those issues, and research more, so I could learn more about them on my own. (Bruce, Interview 1, p. 4)

This demonstrates that a little motivation can go a long way, and even lead students to take responsibility for their own learning. If challenging and motivating students results in such a way, both teacher and student will reap the rewards. Peter asserted the necessity to empower learners:

I'm an adult learner, and I will do the assignments on time and they'll be good, but where the real good learning comes from is when you push yourself to do really well on the assignment. If I do the extra work, then I will learn even more, and it will be more of a worthwhile experience (Interview 1, p. 4).

Without a doubt, it is valuable and imperative to challenge and motivate adult learners. Nevertheless, how teachers at the graduate level should do so fruitfully is an arduous task. Participants in this research proposed that teachers should be enthusiastic about their subject matter and about their students; empower and encourage students;

have high expectations for students, and be flexible. The following quotations were typical responses with respect to the above aspects.

Demonstrate Enthusiasm

An effective teacher must be enthusiastic for the teaching profession and for their students. When speaking of the characteristics of teacher effectiveness, Tina stressed the fact that “it has more to do with the relationship between the professor’s passion for the topic than effectiveness....What matters is whether the person brings the commitment and excitement and enthusiasm to the classroom” (Interview 2, p. 2).

The teacher’s apathetic manner towards teaching and/or students may result in the student’s negative attitude towards learning. As Clark put it:

Professors have a unique opportunity to not only challenge their students but to challenge themselves. When that intrinsic motivation withers, professors see teaching as a job, or as a secondary aspect to their work, below their research perhaps, they won’t have enthusiasm in terms of motivating students, and students will have less enthusiasm to learn. (Interview 1, p. 4)

Inversely, the teacher’s passion for teaching positively influences the student’s fervor for learning. “She was passionate about the topic. She would go off on these big tangents, so I remember what she said in relation to the core material....If someone’s really passionate about something then you really want to listen” (Peter, Interview 1, p. 5).

It seems that the more enthusiastic the teacher is about teaching, the more likely the student is interested in learning (Field notes, Dec. 21, 2004). Consequently, students who are willing to learn have preference for teachers who are full of enthusiasm about their subject. This was reflected by Vicky’s suggestion. “[Teachers] should teach courses that

they have an interest in....I'd rather have someone who really wants to be there; I'd rather work for teachers who are enthusiastic for us" (Interview 1, p. 4).

Empower and Encourage Students

In order to productively challenge and motivate adult learners, the instructor must empower and encourage students, and "the process of teaching adults must be a democratic and collaborative effort" (Field notes, March 15, 2005). In other words, the adult educator has to "support personal growth, encourage changes in self-perception, and facilitate the development of self-awareness" (Journal, Sep. 20, 2004); the adult learner has to "be self-directing, engaged in diagnosing, practicing, and evaluating their learning" (Journal, Sep. 29, 2004). The following quotations elaborate on the above ideas.

First of all, instructors should not take students' opinions for granted. Indeed, they have to be open-minded and to take a more neutral stance on different issues. Vicky explained that "it's effective if teachers allow you to critically look at what they've looked at and understand that you have opinions about their work. That might not necessarily be the same as theirs, but it still has value" (Interview 1, p. 1). Luke had a sour experience that also demonstrated this point.

He kind of forced his opinion on people, and was really biased to different issues....He wasn't a very good listener. He kind of wanted to hear himself speak, which then becomes the teacher's classroom, and not the student's classroom....I think they need to allow all the voices to be heard....Instead of just telling students what they should be doing, and why they should be doing it. (Interview 1, p. 3)

Second, students should be encouraged to create their own path in graduate studies.

As Vicky indicated:

What made them effective was that they didn't generate all of the discussion. They brought up topics to get us thinking and get our attention going, and then they allowed us to discuss it. Instead of following a strict format, they allowed the class to go where we needed to go. (Interview 1, p. 3)

When specifically identifying an effective instructor he had encountered in the graduate school, Bruce also highlighted that students would devote more effort to learning when encouraged to be self-directed learners. "He inspired us to go find topics that were of interest not to him, but of interest to us, and we really worked with the essay even longer or we read many more articles than our classmates are doing (Interview 1, p. 3).

Furthermore, instructors should encourage students to take ownership of what they have learned. Tina expressed the essence of this idea in the following quote.

There is an encouragement to connect the material in one course to another course to work from a different perspective. It gave me a sense of continuity across my curriculum, and it gave me a sense of ownership of my own learning because I could take what I needed from one course and work it a second time for a different purpose in another course. (Interview 1 p. 2)

When the student is granted more freedom or control over the learning process, the student's inherent passion for learning will be aroused. As Clark commented:

[Teachers] critically take into account students' opinions to empower students to create their own learning environments, to create their own aspects of assessment, and to establish what readings are due when, or what readings they wish to present...Instead of dictating what the course is going to be, you have an opportunity

to take the course in a direction that is personal, relevant, and important to the student....The true passions of the student would come out. (Interview 1, p. 4)

Maintain High Expectations

Maintaining high expectations or standards meets the adult learner's intrinsic learning needs. Generally, "adult learners at the graduate level come to education with a lot of experiences, values, and intentions. They therefore consciously strive for meaningful learning" (Field notes, Jan. 15, 2005). As Tina stated, "I wanted it to be a valuable and meaningful experience for me...I didn't want it just to be a credit" (Interview 1, p. 2). She reiterated that "we need some guidance to bring us to a higher level of understanding. Perhaps what makes a master's professor more effective is helping us to move beyond our basic understanding to a higher level" (Interview 1, p. 4). In a similar respect, Clark mentioned:

It is the professor's responsibility to give the students the information and have them question the information, so just not accept the information for what it is, but to think critically about it, and to make links with other researchers, to make links outside the course, to everyday life. (Interview 2, pp. 1-2)

The expectations established by the instructor reciprocally set the bar for student performance, thus dictating the level at which the student learns. Higher expectations from instructors result in higher output from students, and vice versa. When addressing the importance of high expectations, Peter said:

If there's one thing that really motivated me to do well is the professor had high standards that I had felt like I had to build up to, then that's when I did my best work. Because they scared me a little bit, because I thought they might fail me or their

evaluations would be harsh, I really wanted to do well. I feel like I need somebody to kind of kick me in the butt to work harder and do the best. (Interview 1, p. 4)

Maintain Flexibility

The principle of providing flexibility has been endorsed as an efficient means to motivate students at the graduate level. Students appreciate flexibility in regard to teaching content and format, the class schedule, and deadlines for assignments. The flexibility would fulfill the student's potential and facilitate the learning process.

In reference to flexible teaching content and format, Vicky commented that at the graduate level, "some people are at the beginning of the program; some are at the end of the program, so teachers really need to be flexible and know where you're at; what you can do at that moment in their class" (Interview 1, p. 1). In the second interview, Vicky iterated that various opportunities should be given to each individual learner. "If they excel at working with others, they have an opportunity to do that; or if they excel by doing things on their own, they have an opportunity to do that...everybody has an opportunity to be their best" (Interview 2, p. 1). In addition, Peter thought that instructors should not be stiff on using only specific content, which they assume, is favorable to students. "The professor should be more receptive when concerning the real learning content. The content is much more important, rather than just getting all the points" (Interview 1, p. 4).

With respect to a flexible class schedule/agenda, Bruce recalled this experience:

One professor was really good because he set up the class in a way that promoted discussion. It wasn't really a scheduled syllabus. If the discussion was going well or

there was a topic that was interesting, we would cover it until it was finished.

(Interview 1, p. 3)

Bruce further stated that an effective instructor is one who nurtures dialogue in the classroom, and allows students to process the information. He stressed the fact that students benefit less under a rushed class agenda. "Some classes are too rushed. It's all about the time frame....It takes me longer to process information, think about it and then offer input. So if we are rushing through presentations, we don't gain as much from it"

(Interview 2, p. 3). Luke also commented on the desire for a flexible agenda in class.

"If there are some other issues that need to be dealt with in the class, I don't think that they should be brushed off just because the agenda has said this is what we need to do today" (Interview 1, p. 3).

Concerning flexibility with regard to deadlines for assignments, both Vicky and Tina spoke of their appreciation for a particular professor. Vicky said, "the professor was very flexible with timeline, allowing us to take our time to figure out how it was going to be best for us" (Interview 1, p. 3). Tina shared her own experience. She was having a difficult time to meet deadlines for assignments due to illness and one of her professors extended the deadline specifically for her.

She told me to go home...don't even finish the requirements for that course. When I handed them in later, that paper was so much more meaningful because I didn't have the stress. Now, if I had an advisor who said you must have it by this deadline, it would never have worked. (Interview 1, p. 9)

In addition, instructors may even go so far as allowing students a second chance to improve on their work. Allowing students to redo assignments is yet another means of flexibility that can be utilized by teachers to promote better learning. Tina reminisced:

When professors gave me back my work, if I was not happy with the mark, I had the option to redo the paper based on their feedback and comments. To me, that is what learning is. Learning is not just doing it once and then accept it; learning is often redoing it. (Interview 1, p. 3)

From the above analysis, it can be seen that challenging and motivating students is an essential characteristic of teacher effectiveness. There are four predominant approaches to manage it. An effective teacher must have passion for teaching and have enthusiasm for their students; must empower students to take responsibility for their own learning; must raise the academic standard to a high level; and must maintain flexibility to facilitate student learning.

Rapport with Students

Throughout this study, the theme of establishing rapport with students repeatedly surfaced as a key factor in determining the effectiveness of a teacher. Based on feedback from participants, the relevant data were categorized into three subthemes identified as *care*, *one-on-one touch*, and *approachability*. The following focused on these three subthemes in detail.

Care

The instructor should have a constant sense of care in teaching, as “everyone needs to be loved; everyone needs to be encouraged; everyone needs to be told they're doing a good job” (Judy, Interview 1, p. 6). The instructor’s sense of care can have a profound

effect on the student's performance. "The student who is intrinsically reciprocal to the professors' care is going to put a lot more care into their work, as a way of showing that they care about learning" (Clark, Interview 2, p. 2). Clark additionally accentuated the importance of the teacher's care by using the analogy that "if you are the employee, and if your boss cares about you, you are going to want to show that employer that you are a good employee." The same premise can be associated with the relationship between teacher and student. "If you have a professor who does not show the aspect of care, you might not have the motivation to put that extra piece into learning" (Interview 2, p. 2).

There are various aspects of care which instructors could offer to students. Based on the data, a heavy emphasis was placed on *caring about the student as a person* and *caring about the student's learning*. These two chiefly important items help the teacher win respect from the student; aid in developing a good relationship between teacher and student; facilitate the student to build self-confidence; and most importantly, increase students' motivation to learn.

Caring about the student as a person. As adult learners, students at the graduate school level usually take responsibility to be self-motivated learners as part of the self-directing learning process (Journal, Nov. 11, 2004). Nevertheless, students at this level should be given attention when in need. As Judy remarked:

The student is more important than anything. That's why you're there. You're there to help students; you're there to teach the students. When you do have a small number of students, when you do have the time, you should give the little extra as a teacher.

(Interview 1, p. 8)

Judy also had a positive remark for teachers who show a true concern for the well being of the student.

If you personalize things, you get to know the students, and ask them how they feel and what they think about certain things, then it's just going to make for a smoother class all around...a teacher's effectiveness will automatically be increased without having to try. (Interview 1, p. 8)

Vicky's recollection of her experience demonstrated the profound effect a caring teacher can have on a student's attitude towards learning.

They would care about what was going on in our personal life, like last year I was looking for a job, they were interested in knowing how that was going, and when I got a job, they were excited. That helped me to want to come to school, to meet them and share my own things with them, as well as to be interested in school work.

(Interview 1, p. 3)

Admittedly, not all the participants had fond memories of a caring teacher. If the teacher does not care about the student, it will no doubt reflect in the student's attitude and possibly lead to a demoralizing learning environment. Evidence of this can be seen below:

He wasn't organized, so he ended up having to cancel three or four classes because of his illness and because of weather, but he didn't contact us, he just left a message on the door....When he was being inconsiderate and took it for granted, he lost respect from me. (Peter, Interview 1, p. 2)

Caring about the student's learning. "One of the most significant criteria in evaluating teacher effectiveness is to determine whether or not the student is an effective

learner. Teacher success equalizes student success” (Field notes, Dec. 13, 2004). Thus, the teacher should strive to find more time for the student and put more effort into facilitating student learning. Judy mentioned that the effective teacher should recall his/her own experience as a means of understanding the student’s needs and feelings.

We're doing our master's. We have all this coursework; we have to think about writing a research project that we have no idea what to do...it all could be overwhelming, but the professor has been through this, so if they can just kind of take a step back and remember what it was like to be a graduate student, they could really, really help their students along. (Interview 1, p. 1)

She iterated that “their sense of care was so great that I just felt like everything was going to be okay all the time....That was complete reassurance and a really good student and professor rapport” (Interview 1, p. 4).

Bruce believed that an ideal teacher is one who endeavors to help students learn as much as possible, energize students to think in class, and care enough about students to generate new insights and ideas outside class. “I like that about him, because he really cared; he really wanted us to learn....What he cares most about is just getting as much out of his students as he possibly can within the 14 week timeframe” (Interview 1, p. 3).

One-on-one Touch

On account of the relatively low number of students in the graduate program, students do expect to get more individual attention from the instructor. Hence, the instructor must “have a little bit more of that one-on-one touch and that kind of humanitarian qualities...to direct students on the right path....That little extra touch was what made

this professor stand out from the rest” (Lois, Interview 1, p. 3). The following quotations illustrated this tendency.

The one-on-one interaction helps the instructor individualize learning programs that are tailored to students’ needs. Vicky claimed:

A teacher is effective if she or he is able to meet with the students one on one and get to know them to see who they are and what their interests are and to understand where they’re at so that the teacher can follow them through. (Interview 1, p. 2)

The one-on-one touch instills confidence and enthusiasm in students. Lois mentioned that “the interactions with this professor increased my self-confidence, and it made me realize what I could do in a short period of time” (Interview 1, p. 4). “They teach you about yourself and they make you feel important about your sense of self and you’re an important person and you need to work harder in order to get to where you need to go” (Judy, Interview 1, p. 5).

One-on-one communication is a major aspect of building rapport with students. The effective teacher should have “an individual relationship with each student, whether one he was more serious with, or another maybe he was more friendly with” (Bruce, Interview 1, p. 4). Bruce felt that “some teachers go into the classroom and don’t really care to gain a relationship with students. The first hour will be textbook, then we’ll do some presentations then we’ll go home” (Interview 1, p. 4). Such a mechanical process can make students feel uncomfortable and frustrated. Without some form of rapport between teacher and student, it is difficult to imagine a harmonious classroom environment that fosters productive learning. A weak or absence of relationship between teacher and student can have a significant impact on the student’s capacity as learner.

Judy believed that, “if you don't have a good relationship with your student as a professor, they are not gonna (*sic*) be receptive to the information you're delivering” (Interview 1, p. 8).

Rapport between teacher and student motivates students to learn more. As Judy mentioned:

I would work harder, just because the topics were more important to me, the class was basically more important to me because of the professor. And it turned out that I wanted to take another class that I wasn't really interested in, but I did it anyway because they happened to be the same professor. (Interview 1, p. 4)

Approachability

Instructor approachability emerged as an important component in the student-teacher relationship. From the student's perspective, approachability means “being able to talk at any time with an instructor about work without feeling awkward” (Journal, March 22, 2005). For a teacher, approachability should mean “being more than willing to take their time to help students” (Lois, Interview 1, p. 3). Approachability is “one critical element that allows a teacher and a student to get to know each other on a personal level” (Clark, Interview 1, p. 2).

Approachability can facilitate solid rapport between teacher and student. Clark expressed his preference to select courses according to the teacher's approachability. “I would have a second course with the same professor, not so much based on the subject of the course, but based on their approachability....I would stay away from other professors who I felt didn't have that approachability” (Interview 2, p. 2).

By contrast, inapproachability hinders the development of rapport between teacher and student. Judy brought up a perfect example of this scenario.

I ran into a problem when I was doing the paper for the course, and I really wanted to talk about it with the professor, but that person totally didn't have the time of day to talk to me, and emails were not replied to me on time....I was actually bitter towards that particular individual for quite a while. (Interview 1, p. 5)

In an ideal relationship, “students would be able to approach the instructor when necessary; the professor would be willing to spend extra time after class with a student” (Journal, Feb. 14, 2005). However, oftentimes, professors are unapproachable because they are simply overwhelmed. “They are teaching graduate and undergraduate courses” (Bruce, Interview 1, p. 6); and/or “they are really busy writing research papers, submitting journal articles” (Lois, Interview 1, p. 4); and/or they have lost the luster for their work which unfortunately leaves students abandoned when it comes to seeking counsel from their teacher. One participant commented on such a situation.

I would have to say that an ineffective teacher is one that doesn't have that approachability...they seem as if they are ready to retire...and I say that somewhat humorously, but in fact there are a lot of teachers who are, you know, they're expired...so they don't have enthusiasm about teaching or meeting students. (Clark, Interview 1, p. 2)

It would be of great benefit to the student if there was a way for the teacher to offer “more opportunity to meet students, to clarify certain things” (Bruce, Interview 1, p. 6).

In addition to the professor's willingness to help, students would appreciate a larger window of opportunity to meet with professors, as often their office hours are fairly

limited. Although some can be quite accommodating, a few participants pointed out that meetings with professors are often not long enough due to the teacher's busy schedule. Moreover, students prefer the face-to-face meeting, since "many professors have been answering questions via email in which answers are not as clarified as they could be" (Bruce, Interview 1, p. 6).

By and large, in order to build great rapport with students in an effort to increase their motivation as learners, it is essential that the instructor exhibit some level of care; establish one-on-one communication with students, and strive for approachability for their students.

Learning Environment

A learner-centered environment is one of the fundamental characteristics of adult education. In order for students to profitably conduct self-directed learning, the instructor at the graduate level must take the responsibility as a facilitator to create the effective learning environment or class atmosphere to positively influence student learning and increase their academic achievements.

The teacher should be committed to providing an inviting and respectful learning environment to deal with students' apprehensions and uncertainty, and in the meantime create an emotionally safe classroom atmosphere that promotes learning. Clark agreed that the teacher should possess a strong ability to "harness an inviting atmosphere in which there is co-operative learning in the classroom" (Interview 1, p. 1); where "a professor becomes a learner, and everyone felt very at ease to talk and to be outspoken" (Clark, Interview 1, p. 2). With empathy and sensitivity, teachers "are creating the learning environment that is important in critical debate, because you know that when

you say something in the classroom, you are not going to be shut down and your responses are going to be addressed” (Clark, Interview 2, p. 2). Judy’s comments also voiced this concern. “Sometimes in classes where there is no sense of being welcome, I felt like we shouldn’t be there because the teacher is having a bad day” (Interview 1, p. 2). She further suggested that the teacher should always “make the class a happy place, a safe place where you could easily share your feelings, because some of the topics were quite personal and quite controversial and sometimes people would get upset” (Interview 1, p. 4).

Another important factor related to the learning environment in light of participants’ statement is that a vibrant and challenging learning environment is beneficial to students. To create such a stimulating environment, the teacher should utilize effective methods to foster creativity and support different learning styles. Judy said, “what I really liked about the graduate school was the discussions we had....The conversations were able to evolve in such a manner that all the students were allowed to say their piece and have their input” (Interview 1, p. 3). In Bruce’s words, “the teacher creates some kind of discussion, so the students don’t just sit there; the teacher is the speaker and the students are the listeners and it’s more of a group setting” (Interview 1, p. 1). He further addressed that “the teacher created an atmosphere where you were able to have confrontations with him and have discussions with him and things like that. Sometimes it was kind of combative, but it was just to create a high energy classroom” (Interview 1, p. 4).

On the whole, an inviting, respectful, and safe learning environment provides the student with comfort for learning, while a stimulating and challenging learning environment supplies the student with motivation for learning.

Course Demands

Course demands, according to the participants' remarks, encompass four main elements: course materials, workload difficulty, course designs, and assignments. It is not surprising that students' perceptions vary with regard to course demands due to their diverse learning styles and needs.

With respect to reading materials, "the majority of them are very appropriate" (Clark, Interview 2, p. 3); "the textbooks are really good" (Vicky, Interview 1, p. 4); and "the materials were overall, carefully selected" (Peter, Interview 2, p. 4). Nonetheless, in terms of workload, reading materials can be completely overwhelming at times. For instance, Vicky recalled this experience: "I did have a professor who gave us way too many readings that it wasn't quite possible ever to get that many readings done" (Interview 1, p. 4). Another participant commented, "to be able to process information, and to really gain the insights and discuss this material, we cannot read so much in such a short time. It is hard to remember everything that we are studying" (Bruce, Interview 2, p. 2). On the other hand, some professors do not give enough reading assignments, and as a result, students do not learn the full potential of the course. Vicky recalls her experience with a professor who issued little in the way of readings.

You haven't really thought about the class during the week, and you haven't really sat down and looked at the course work and prepared for the class. So at the time, it was nice because you didn't have a lot of extra work, but looking back, I don't think I was engaged in the subject matter as much. (Interview 1, p. 4)

Vicky came to a conclusion that “the extremes throw you off. If workload is not enough, then you just sort of slack off; if it’s too much, then you also don’t feel like really even starting” (Vicky, Interview 1, p. 4). Consequently, there is a need for balance.

In regard to course designs, Bruce felt that “everything seems to follow just the generic structure” (Interview 2, p. 2). Clark positively explained:

There were a lot of similarities between my courses, and I think they offered the same amount of workload and the skill set didn’t range from class to class, which is good in a sense, because there is a commonality among the classes. And as far as the assessment goes, students are being assessed on the same things. (Interview 2, p. 3)

However, “when you are in a program, every course is pretty much the same with one ten-paged paper, one presentation, and three reflective pieces or something like that...your range in applying your skills is fairly limited” (Clark, Interview 2, p. 3).

Moreover, the course should be designed with the student’s needs in mind, not chiefly upon the teacher’s preferences. Peter was displeased with one course “which should be very hands on”, but the professor “took a much more textbook-based approach. You have to remember all of these terms, and even had a final exam....If I had more practical experience, I might have been less inclined to take a less challenging research path” (Interview 2, p. 4). Tina’s comments stressed a relative point.

The curriculum description in the course calendar describes it as gaining expertise in qualitative and quantitative research methods. What I found in reality...the professor had a strong background in qualitative and I never really did learn quantitative....In terms of what I didn't learn, I am going to graduate with very little understanding of quantitative analysis. (Interview 1, p. 7)

Concerning the element of assignments, both Clark and Tina captured well the core of this matter.

It is the quality of the assignment, not so much the course load. I think that depends on the questions that are being asked, the type of responses that the teachers are looking for. I think that says a lot more than the quantity of the assignments. (Clark, Interview 2, p. 3)

What Tina was most concerned about was the learning outcomes.

Professors will give the assignment without identifying the purpose of the assignment. And that to me is the problem with the professors....They are not clear, why I am doing this exercise; what I am demonstrating at the end of doing this assignment; what skills and knowledge I am going to demonstrate. (Interview 2, p. 1)

In general, course demands must be tailored to the student's learning needs. There should be a balance when choosing course materials and distributing workload. The course must be designed on a diverse and applicable basis. The assignment should be allocated on a quality-driven and outcome-motivated basis.

Assessment and Feedback

Providing feedback and assessments to students is an essential component in the development of the learning process. "Teacher assessment and feedback help students to promote personal growth and reflection, to diagnose future learning needs, to improve the learning process, and eventually to become more effective learners" (Journal, April 15, 2005).

Feedback

Basically, teachers should offer “good feedback to explain why certain areas of your paper are really good or are not really good” (Bruce, Interview 1, p. 4). “Students need direction, criticism, and even praise. Without it, there is little chance of recognizing the areas they need to improve on, and/or exploiting on their strengths” (Field notes, Dec. 21, 2004). Consequently, clear, meaningful, and consistent feedback is a necessary factor in helping students to “enhance their learning” (Lois, Interview 2, p. 1). The following quote epitomizes the value of feedback to students.

I feel like I got a lot out of the course. It was not so much the mark they gave me, it was more like the feedback. They acknowledged something that I had not thought of; they pointed out the weakness and strength here and there....I still like reading it actually....They stay with me a lot of time too. (Peter, Interview 2, pp. 2-3)

In comparison to the undergraduate class, graduate students receive more feedback because in an intimate setting of 10 to 20 students, the professor has more opportunity to offer feedback. However, in one participant’s opinion, “for the majority of time, comments are never good enough, never elaborate enough” (Lois, Interview 1, p. 1). Ideally, Lois proposed that “professors would have a sit down one on one conference with their students, explaining exactly what they thought, what the people could improve on” (Interview 2, p. 2).

Furthermore, Vicky pointed out that “I would like to know more of how I’m doing in terms of participation...because you often don’t know until the end...maybe more comments during the term, like a bit of encouragement might be something that would help” (Interview 1, p. 5).

Additionally, in reference to meaningful feedback, Tina made a valid point:

The majority of the professors that I had, tended to write the comments on the paper, which I like very much. I tended to get very positive feedback most of the time. In terms of *useful* [italic added], I think that's up to the students to find out, because it is only useful, if I decide to do something with it. (Interview 2, p. 1)

Overall, as an effective teacher, "it is very, very important to really truly mark, to give feedback on what they're doing right, what they're doing wrong, how they can improve on this"(Judy, Interview 1, p. 6).

Assessment

In order to ensure timely progress toward the completion of their degree, graduate students should be provided with realistic, accurate, fair, and up-to-date assessment. The following quotations were typical responses with respect to this aspect.

Peter disliked the "unspoken rule" of assessment supplied by his professors. "Unless the student does really badly, everyone passes, and you can't tell the difference between a 92 and an 82" (Interview 1, p. 3). Rather than being flexible on a student's mark, Peter preferred that professors "should be flexible about giving learners an opportunity to make themselves better....Don't give this person a "B", if it's really a "C", and then explain that this is what you have to do to make it better" (Interview 1, p. 7).

Judy could not complain about high marks, but what annoyed her was the feeling that she was stuck in a defined grading category.

I was getting the same marks regardless of how I tried. So if I really put a lot of effort into it, I would get an 88, and if I didn't put a lot of effort into it, I would get an 88 or an 86 or an 82. It all fell between 82 and 88....I felt that I was targeted as an 86, so

my marks would fluctuate between 84 and 88 all the time and I always felt like I'm so and so and I'm the 86. (Interview 1, p. 6)

In short, providing students with realistic, accurate, fair, and up-to-date assessment along with clear, meaningful, and consistent feedback is a vital responsibility for teachers in the teaching process.

In addition to the seven dimensions which were addressed as the most important factors of teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives, the teacher's research involvement and personality also influence teacher effectiveness to some extent. The third section below focused on these two controversial issues in relation to teacher effectiveness.

Research Involvement and Teacher Effectiveness

Teaching and doing research are two different but intimately related professions. Both are imperative components for a successful professor at the graduate level. All participants suggested that professors need to find a way to complement these two activities and maintain a fair balance between them.

Necessity

Research involvement is absolutely necessary and advantageous to both professor and student. It not only helps update the teacher's knowledge to feed teaching, but also provides an opportunity for students who "are able to experientially learn about the research" (Clark, Interview 2, p. 1).

Ideally, a professor who is teaching should be doing some research, because although "teachers' opinions are very important in the program, their opinions should be based on prior research" (Bruce, Interview 2, p. 1). "In order to be up to date with the research in

the field, the professors need to be continuing learning and be engaged in the research” (Clark, Interview 2, p. 1), so that “they’re active in what their teaching is about” (Vicky, Interview 2, p. 1). Professors should teach with respect to their research because “it’s their knowledge, it’s their experience, it’s what they know....The knowledge that the teacher acquires becomes useful” (Judy, Interview 2, p. 1).

Students will benefit from their professor’s research as in fact “we will have to do research as well in the future, so it’s important for us to understand and see what goes on” (Judy, Interview 2). Technically, research will be useless unless the researcher shares it with others, and, therefore, Peter expected that “if the professors are passionate about their research, hopefully, they’ll be also passionate about sharing it with others” (Interview 2, p. 5). “They shouldn’t be afraid to share their research. I’d be excited to hear more about how they do that and how they developed it” (Vicky, Interview 1, p. 5).

Caution

In spite of the fact that professors at the graduate level are under a constant pressure from the faculty to do research, they must be aware that too much time and effort dedicated to it may impose on the quality of their teaching responsibilities.

To some extent, if there were less emphasis on doing research, teachers may prove to be more effective in that they would have more time and energy to contribute to teaching, and to their students. Lois declared that “I’ve had many professors who sit in their office doing research all the time, like the crazy scientists or whatever...honestly, their teaching ability was not as good as people who were less focused on their research” (Interview 2, p. 1). Judy supported Lois’ statement by saying:

If you want to spend the next 6 months really divulging in your research, that's fine as long as at times you can take that to your teaching classroom and pay enough attention to that as well....Sometimes professors need to leave, set aside the research, focus on teaching, focus on their students. (Interview 2, p. 1)

It can be discouraging for students if they feel there is less value placed on teaching.

Peter recalled a disappointing experience in regard to this issue:

I got the distinct impression that he only wanted to do research....He was the one who basically didn't do any lecturing at all. And he just kind of sat back and graded things. He graded things very slowly. And it was hard to get feedback from him....He was also the one who canceled all these classes. He basically didn't want to deal with students very much, which is too bad. I think he had a lot of knowledge, but he wasn't very good at putting it across. (Interview 2, p. 5)

Tina further cautioned that too much time spent on research may be at the expense of the students.

When we pay our money to come to the university, I am not coming to be involved in somebody who is doing research. I am coming to be involved with someone who can facilitate my learning....The professors who are so wrapped in their research may not have the time to devote to what we need to teaching. Teaching is a full-time commitment. It is not just in the classroom, it is the readings you do to stay current, it's the relationship you have with your students, marking the papers, and giving the feedback, and being available. (Interview 2, p. 3)

Suggestion

To meet the university's expectation, professors have an obligation to do research as well as teach. "The professor can be recognized at the university level for teaching the good class, but as far as the evaluation goes, the professor earns his or her merits on the research basis" (Clark, Interview 2, p. 1). Thus, some professors prefer doing research to teaching. However, because "the government funding is getting less and less to students, and to universities; the tuition is going up, up and up, people are going to become more demanding" (Tina, Interview 2, p. 3) for teaching quality. Such incompatible realities have been putting professors in an awkward situation. There is a need for a better way to appreciate the teacher's role as a teacher and researcher. The following are some suggestions from participants.

If professors like to do research, "there should be a place for them in the university. I think that it is okay for professors to be just involved in research....If they don't want to teach, they shouldn't be made to teach (Peter, Interview 2, p. 5). Tina suggested that "you have your expert professor who's doing research, who works on a team with an expert teacher who can facilitate the topic. I think that is what's going to have to happen" (Interview 2, p. 3). Another suggestion was proposed by Bruce.

Perhaps they can have a semester relay, entirely do research, and the next term, they entirely do teaching. That will work probably better, because sometimes there is a possibility that the teaching can take away time from the research, and the research might take away their enthusiasm from teaching. (Interview 2, p. 1)

From the above analysis, we can see that, at the graduate level, the professor's research involvement could influence teacher effectiveness positively and negatively. It

depends on whether or not a professor manages teaching and their research in a balanced manner.

Personality and Teacher Effectiveness

With respect to whether or not the personality of the professor matters to teacher effectiveness, participants proclaimed various outlooks in light of their individual backgrounds and experiences. Some believed that personality does have a lot to do with teacher effectiveness, some deemed that personality counts merely in certain circumstances; others conceived that it does not matter very much. The following comments demonstrate the discrepancy.

Lois made a strong statement that personality has a great impact on the effectiveness of a professor. She emphasized that personality comes through in teaching, in a way that enhances the learning process.

We could kind of relate more to certain professors that had empathy and compassion for their students....The person who is more prone to interacting with others or liking a people person, is sometimes a lot better than somebody who is more reserved or sometimes even quiet....The rapport that you develop with individuals in your class and making them feel like a collaborative group helped us kind of get through the material, and get through the emotions, so somebody who you feel is more welcoming and somebody that you are more comfortable with, helped in enhancing my learning experience. (Interview 2, pp. 2-3)

Bruce was concerned that “if I have a teacher who comes into the class, just kind of lecture or speak to himself, just kind of reiterate other researchers’ stuff, then to me, that’s very dry personality.” He further pointed out that the teacher with an enthusiastic

personality could improve teacher effectiveness. “If the teacher is enthusiastic, and kind of works with the students, and creates the discussion and things like that, the class would be more effective because it helps us to involve in and gain our own insights” (Interview 2, p. 1).

Judy felt strongly about the effect a teacher’s personality can have on the learning environment and the student’s experience.

If you bring a great attitude, and a positive personality in the classroom...you are smiling, and you make jokes and the students really enjoy that, and I think they really pick up on that positive energy....If you are just not in a good mood, and you haven’t slept or, you are not prepared, then you just stick to the monotone voice and students get bored. (Interview 1, p. 2)

She further stressed that, to some extent, the professor with a negative personality discourages student learning. “I’ve had other professors who I have felt a little shy or timid, so I was not so confident in myself to ask them questions, and I really felt that I didn’t get enough from the course” (Interview 1, p. 1). On the other hand, Judy proclaimed that “I don’t think that you have to have a positive, wonderful personality to be an effective teacher. Sure it will help, but it’s not an absolute necessity” (Interview 2, p. 2).

As Judy admitted that personality is not a primary aspect in regard to teacher effectiveness, the following participants concurred. Tina explained that if a teacher with “a very wonderful personality has no interest or passion in the topic that’s being presented” (Tina, Interview 2, p. 3), the personality factor will become meaningless. “It’s not so much the relationship between the professor’s personality and teacher

effectiveness; it has more to do with the relationship between the professor's passion for the topic and effectiveness" (Interview 2, p. 2)

Peter argued that personality does not matter from a different point of view.

It's important at the beginning when they are establishing a presence in the class to show that they are receptive to suggestions and students' needs; they care about the students; they are patient enough to explain something that might be difficult.

However, as the teacher's role changes and the students take the class over more, their personality becomes less of a factor. (Interview 2, p. 1)

Overall, a positive personality potentially contributes to teacher effectiveness, in that the teacher's attitude has an effect on the student's learning attitude. However, the personality factor is not an indispensable characteristic of teacher effectiveness.

Chapter Summary and Conclusions

This chapter presented the findings of this study based on the analyzed data gathered from interviews, field notes, and journals. The representative quotes were evenly selected from eight participants. Although the participants' perceptions of teacher effectiveness varied, Table 4 and 5 have illustrated that they are noticeably inclusive, echoing, or supplementary.

Teacher effectiveness is markedly influential at the graduate level, as it instills confidence and motivation into students for learning; stimulates students' dedication towards learning; and directs students towards their learning goals. However, a student's willingness to learn is a prerequisite of teacher effectiveness, and, therefore, it is essential that the teacher challenges and motivates students to take responsibility for their learning.

Due to the multidimensionality of teaching and learning, we may never be able to open the dictionary and look up a wholly defined explanation of teacher effectiveness. Nor may we have the ability to accurately test or utilize some tool to measure teacher effectiveness. At the graduate level, one such cause of this indefinite circumstance begins with the teacher's individual teaching practices and techniques, combined with the student's various learning needs and styles. Nevertheless, several major dimensions of teacher effectiveness were identified and highlighted in this study. A model of the dimensions of teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives was generated (see Figure 1) accordingly.

First and foremost, the participants in this study expressed that the teacher must be knowledgeable and familiar with the course material and possess an excellent command of subject matter. In order for the teacher to gain the attention and respect of the students, the teacher must establish a *presence* in the classroom. With respect to the teacher's method of presentation, participants preferred such qualities as exhibiting enthusiasm, creativity, and sharing personal experiences. Third, challenging and motivating students is an essential and core characteristic of teacher effectiveness. To successfully manage it, an effective teacher must show enthusiasm, empower students, raise the academic expectations, and maintain flexibility. Moreover, in an effort to build a great rapport with students, it is vital that the instructor care about students, establish one-on-one communication with students, and strive for approachability with students. Furthermore, an inviting, respectful, and stimulating learning environment provides the student with

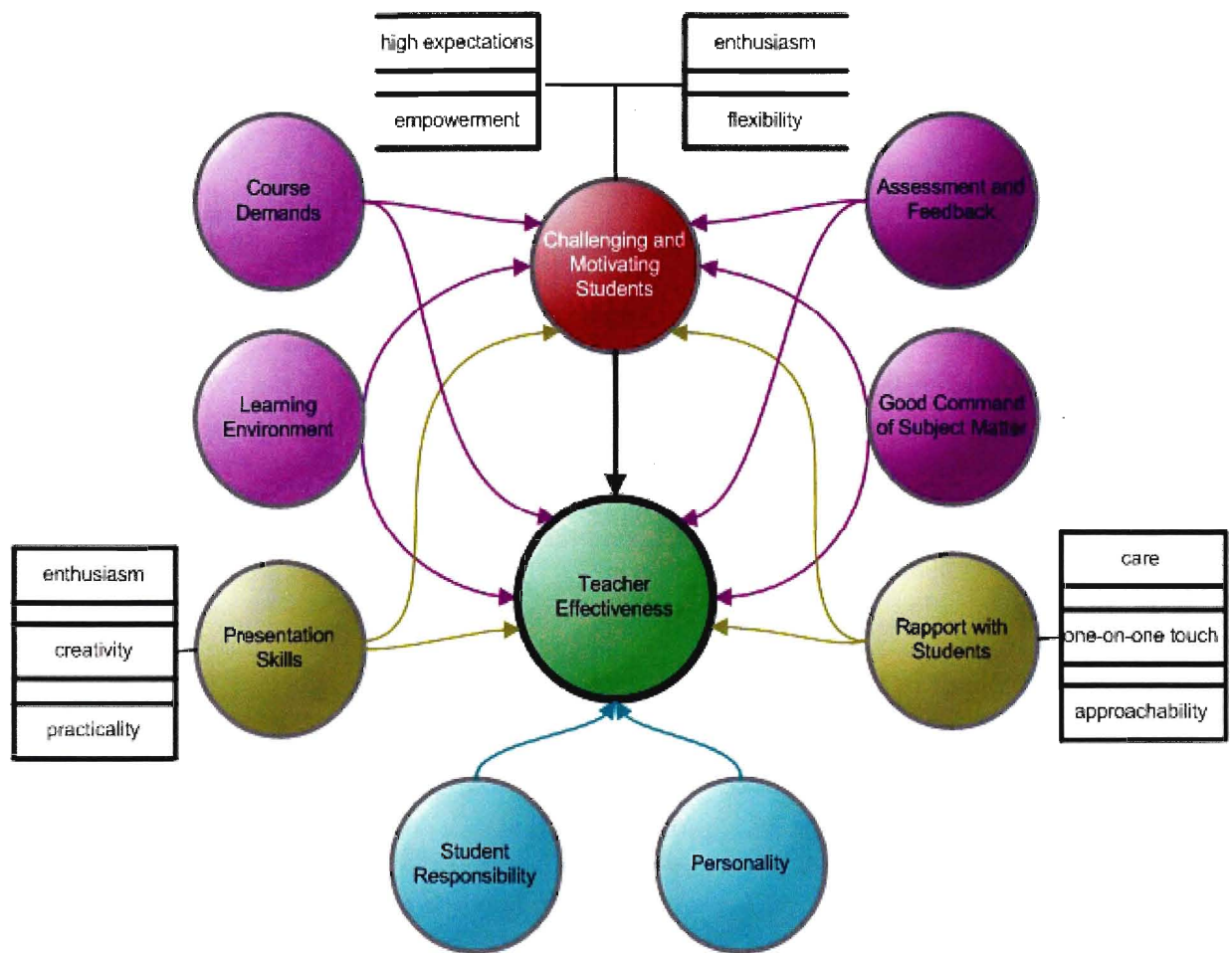


Figure 1. Model of dimensions of teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perceptions.

comfort and motivation for learning. As well, course demands must be tailored to the student's learning needs. The assessment and feedback must be timely, fair, realistic, and up to date.

In addition, research involvement benefits both teacher and student. However, the teacher must endeavor to maintain a balance between teaching and his/her research efforts. A greater focus on one may be at the expense of the other. Finally, a positive personality contributes to teacher effectiveness, but the personality factor is not so pertinent in evaluating teacher effectiveness.

Besides, it is interesting to recognize that no systematic differences were revealed between male and female students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness in this study. It appears that a student's gender has little influence on their evaluation of the instructor. However, noticeable differences were discovered between younger and older participants' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. Future research is needed to determine the cause(s) of these similarities and distinctions.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

In Chapter Five, the summary of this thesis was briefly presented. Following the discussion of the findings of this study, implications for theory, practice, and further research were provided.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the full-time graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness, to identify how graduate students perceive effective and ineffective teachers, and specifically to discover the main dimensions of teacher effectiveness. It was hoped that the study would move towards developing a theory that contributes to the knowledge base of graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. It was anticipated that the results would provide first-hand information for the instructor to improve quality teaching; for the administrator to develop more effective procedures to promote the educational experiences and student achievements (Braskamp et al., 1984). It was intended that the findings would lay a theoretical and empirical groundwork for future research.

The researchable questions which drove this research are as follows: How do graduate students define and measure teacher effectiveness? What is the importance of teacher effectiveness to graduate students? What major dimensions of teacher effectiveness do students perceive as most important at the graduate level? How do these dimensions of teacher effectiveness influence graduate students academically and emotionally? These questions framed the process and guided me in the data collection, the data analysis, and the presentation of the findings.

The first four chapters of this document served several functions, including providing an introduction of the topic and study, reviewing the related literature, explaining the methodology and procedures, and presenting the results of the study.

A review of the relevant literature was conducted to ensure a full understanding of the knowledge and ideas that had been established surrounding teacher effectiveness, and to identify literature gaps in an effort to raise new questions. Although a large body of research (Abrami & d' Apollonia, 1991; Cashin & Downey, 1992; Feldman, 1997; Lowe & Brock, 1994; Marsh & Roche, 1993; Olivares, 2003; Palmer, 1998; Seldin, 1984; Stronge, 2002) has been accomplished to explore more about teacher effectiveness, there are gaps which need to be further investigated. First, there is no universal consensus of the definition and measure of teacher effectiveness. Secondly, despite the fact that the student is considered as a highly valued source for teacher evaluation, few qualitative studies have been carried out to discover teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives. Little is known about graduate students' perceptions of the importance of teacher effectiveness. Also, what dimensions of teacher effectiveness essentially matter to graduate students and why they matter have been disregarded. Third, certain controversial issues which are constantly under debate need to be further clarified from students' perspectives, such as the relationship between teacher personality and teacher effectiveness and the relationship between teacher research involvement and teacher effectiveness. These gaps served to substantiate the need for further research in the area of graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness, thus, providing a rationale.

The literature review also helped to clarify the type of methodology that should be utilized to best assess the situation in a local context. Most prior research associated with

this topic had been conducted using quantitative methodologies, which are more interested in how often the particular activity occurs rather than what happens and how it happens (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). In order to understand processes rather than outcomes, and to explore how people create meaning out of the events (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), the grounded theory design was selected as the method of data collection and analysis due to its potential to contribute to the development of theory.

Data were generated through interviews, field notes, and journals to create the triangulation of the data. Two interviews were performed for each participant at their convenience and both were audio recorded and transcribed. The transcribed interviews were examined repeatedly using an inductive approach, in order to identify themes that would serve to confirm, reject, or modify my interpretation of the literature. Data analysis presented some interesting challenges, but several main themes emerged when seeking connections among the seemingly unrelated information.

Chapter Four provided an overview and a summary of the findings of the study. Grounded theory generated by this study was described. Several major themes were described in detail employing quotes and synopsis from the data sources mentioned above, to lead to a better understanding of the full-time graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness.

Discussion

According to the research questions described previously, the discussion was divided into four parts. Following the interpretation of the definition and measure of teacher effectiveness, the importance of teacher effectiveness specifically from graduate students' perspectives was emphasized. In the third part, seven dimensions of teacher effectiveness

graduate students deem as most important were investigated. Last, certain controversial issues in the reviewed literature were explored. The whole section was discussed as it related to the literature and theory.

Definition and Measure of Teacher Effectiveness

The findings of this study revealed that defining an effective teacher continues to be “one of the most difficult tasks in education” (Stollenwerk, 2004, p. 3). Because it is an area dogged by controversy with many different viewpoints and positions, it is not surprising that there was no general agreement on definition and measure of teacher effectiveness generated by the present study.

In my initial examination of the transcripts, there seemed to be a measure of agreement over some particular qualities which were liked or disliked. There also seemed to be quite marked differences between some of the interviewees as to the way good and poor teaching was described. For example, Lois’ perspectives, the teacher is considered to be effective if he or she has a good command of subject matter, uses a variety of strategies to motivate students, has a good relationship with students, and adapts to students’ needs. Whereas from Judy’s point of view, an effective teacher is someone who has a lot of knowledge of the literature and knows how to deliver the material effectively; someone who cares about the student as a person, and cares about student learning. Also, empowering students and being creative are considered by Bruce, Peter, and Tina as most significant factors of teacher effectiveness.

This multidimensionality of defining and measuring teacher effectiveness is evident in the related literature. What constitutes effective teaching, according to the related literature, may rest on student achievements, or comments from students, administrators,

and other interested stakeholders (Pozo-Munoz et al., 2000; Stronge, 2002;); could be grounded in theory (Olivares, 2003); or could be subjected to one's definition of the goals of teaching (Arthur et al., 2003; Lowe & Brock, 1994). Therefore, educators and researchers have failed to reach a consensus on clear-cut answers to questions (Young & Shaw, 1999, p. 670) such as: What is teacher effectiveness? How may it be defined? How may it be measured?

The complexity of formulating a single definition for teacher effectiveness, based upon participants' responses, is partially due to its irrecognizable nature and lack of immediateness. In other words, we may only notice teacher effectiveness when it is not there, and we may not recognize the effectiveness until we are confronted with it. These innovative notions have not been referred to in the reviewed literature. However, other intervening factors such as subjectivity (McLean, 2001; Olivares, 2003; Pozo-Munoz et al., 2000), motivation to learn, the learning style (Brown & Atkins, 1988, p. 15), and the multidimensionality of teaching (Abrami & d' Apollonia, 1991; Cashin & Downey, 1992; Feldman, 1997; Marsh & Roche, 1993; Palmer, 1998) overlap the findings of this research.

Consequently, we cannot summarize or generalize teacher effectiveness in a single evaluative trend by assigning numerical values to it, because "effective teachers come in all shapes and sizes" (McKeachie, 1997, p. 1218), and "what counts as effective in one context may not be so in another" (Brown & Atkins, 1988, p. 4). We cannot deem teachers' own styles which do not suit us to be ineffective, because effective teachers are not necessarily rated high on every other important variable; they can have some

deficiencies. In Marsh's (1983) words, "effective teaching is a hypothetical construct, and there is no universally accepted measure of it" (p. 163).

Importance of Teacher Effectiveness to Graduate Students

Since teacher effectiveness is a markedly complicated concept and seemingly impossible to define with certainty, why have researchers put so much effort into it? This concern has stimulated a substantial body of research (e.g., Forrester-Jones, 2003; McLean, 2001; Marsh, 1987; Marsh & Roche, 1993; Solas, 1990; Kember & Wong, 2002) into the importance of evaluating teacher effectiveness. The relevant literature has illustrated that defining and measuring teacher effectiveness plays an important role in providing: (a) formative feedback to faculty for improving teaching; (b) a summative measure of teaching effectiveness to be used in personnel decisions; (c) information to students for the selection of courses and teachers (Marsh & Roche, 1993); (d) "an outcome or a process description for research on teaching" (Marsh, 1991, p. 285). The reviewed literature has also demonstrated that student evaluation has been considered as the most valid measure of teacher effectiveness (Cashin, 1988; Marsh, 1984), because it is relatively valid against a variety of indicators of effective teaching, and relatively unaffected by a variety of variables hypothesized as potential biases to the evaluation (Marsh & Bailey, 1993).

It appears that the reviewed literature generally focuses a great deal on the importance of evaluating teacher effectiveness as well as the necessity of involving students as a fundamental source of teacher evaluation. Largely missing in the literature, however, is any contribution made by students themselves to a concept of the importance of teacher

effectiveness. The present study revealed the significance from this particular angle accordingly.

My findings of this study revealed that teacher effectiveness is dramatically important because it can motivate students' willingness to work harder and to learn more so that students become more effective learners and apply what they learn to future situations. In order to reach the learning goals, students must have effective teachers to guide them in the right direction. Furthermore, teacher effectiveness not only instills confidence and enthusiasm into the student to become an effective student, but also acts as a catalyst for student learning. After all, there is an agreement that effective teachers do have an extraordinary and lasting impact on the lives of students (Stronge, 2002).

It is also interesting to note that, although having an effective teacher is vital to student learning, the findings also revealed that the learner's responsibility is also an essential feature contributing to teacher effectiveness. One of the clear and abiding hallmarks of effective teaching is to facilitate student learning. That is, teacher success equals student success (Stronge, 2002, p. 65). This underlying cause and effect necessitates a great need for the teacher to motivate the adult learner to take the responsibility of their own learning in order to reach the learning goal. Figure 2 demonstrates the relationship between these three factors.

Major Dimensions of Teacher Effectiveness

The literature does not supply a clearly articulated definition of teacher effectiveness or agreement regarding the qualities that effective teachers possess. Nonetheless, there are common attributes that characterize effective teachers. Such a tendency seems to be mutually reinforced by the presented study. The analysis of the interview data showed

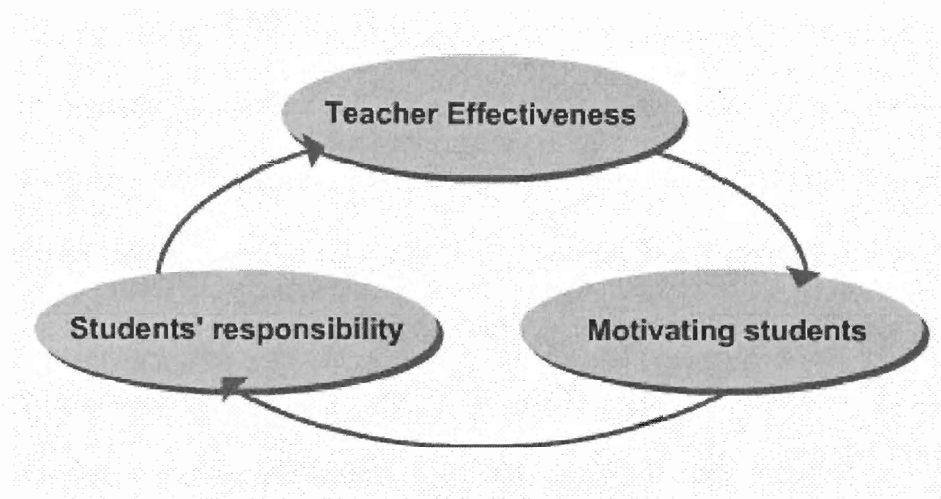


Figure 2. Triad of the relations between teacher effectiveness, student responsibility, and motivating students.

that students characterize teacher effectiveness as having some consistently recurring traits, including good command of subject matter, presentation skill, challenging and motivating students, rapport with students, learning environment, course demands, as well as assessment and feedback. Such findings greatly correspond to the first-order factors of teacher effectiveness in the reviewed literature (see Table 2 & Table 3). However, while sharing similarities, the present study and the reviewed literature bear different foci in each dimension.

Good command of subject matter. The findings of this study revealed the significance of a good command of subject matter for an effective teacher. In order to deliver the teaching content efficiently, the teacher must be knowledgeable enough to be familiar with teaching materials and to possess an excellent command of content knowledge and breadth of coverage. Some literature (e.g., Crader & Butler, 1996; Marsh 1982; Medley 1979; Smittle 2003; Yost 2002) I reviewed also argues for the importance of this attribute. Despite the reality that the instructor at the graduate level plays different roles, the fundamental responsibility is to be involved in the transmission of knowledge (Banner & Cannon, 1997) and “to deliver the content accurately and efficiently and ensure that students master the content” (Bates & Poole, 2003, p. 41). Therefore, students value the instructor who acts with professionalism and demonstrates a vast base of content knowledge (Kuther, 2003, p. 158); in other words, the effective instructor who is knowledgeable must endeavor to display or present knowledge successfully in front of students.

Good teachers must understand how their learners think, and reason about the content so as to help learners develop increasingly complex and sophisticated cognitive structures

for comprehending the content (Bates & Poole, 2003, p. 42). Moreover, both my findings in this study and the reviewed literature (Banner & Cannon, 1997; Smittle, 2003) notify that knowledge is ever-changing, and ever-growing. Teachers must continually be learning in order to keep up with current knowledge of the subject.

Presentation skills. This major dimension was one of the predominant themes that emerged from the data as expected. However, the focus is considerably different from that of the literature. The related literature concentrates on presentation clarity and the preparedness of presentation. For example, Stollenwerk (2004) indicates that effective teachers inform clear lesson aims; have an oral delivery that is direct, audible, and understandable to students; convey concepts in ways that help students follow along in a logical order; utilize examples and illustrations to explain and clarify; offer review or summarize at the end of each lesson (pp. 12-13). Darling-Hammond (1992) points out that fully prepared teachers are more effective than unprepared teachers in knowing how to guide and encourage student learning, knowing how to individualize student learning, how to plan productive lessons, and how to diagnose student problems.

By contrast, the findings of this study lay a heavy emphasis on teacher presence, presentation multidimensionality, and use of appropriate methods of presentation. The reason the participants appreciate teacher presence in class can be seen in the following discussion. Literature has demonstrated that adult learners value being self-directing and being self-motivated (Panasuk & Lebaron, 1999), because learners appear to learn more and better when they take initiative in the educational process by undertaking self-directed learning (Knowles, 1975). Nevertheless, the student needs guidance from the teacher to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for

learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes (Apps, 1988; Knowles, 1975, 1984b). Cranton (1992) claims that one of the prominent roles the professor plays in higher education is the expert role, in which the instructor delivers a lecture or demonstration. This instructor-centred method works more effectively when learners are unfamiliar with the content. Hence, my findings of this study suggest that there is need for a balance between the teacher's presence and the students' presence in class. On the one hand, the student enjoys the process of taking charge in class through seminar presentations or other meaningful activities. On the other hand, the student enjoys learning from the experienced expertise, which requires that the teacher's presence is an indispensable component of an effective class.

Moreover, there is general agreement in the theoretical literature that quality teaching is multifaceted (Burdsal & Bardo, 1986, p. 64), which originally explains the multidimensionality of the effective presentation in this study. My findings revealed that the student may learn from a teacher who is well organized because his or her professionalism promotes the motivation of student learning. The student may learn from a teacher who is disorganized, but his or her enthusiasm about the course matter inspires the student's passion for learning. This multidimensionality probably stems from the nature of adult learners. With diverse levels of education, experience, commitment, and expectation (Corder, 2002), adult learners have their own set of learning patterns (Rogers, 2002). This requires that the teacher adapts to individual differences to set learning goals, chooses teaching materials, and selects effective strategies (Cranton, 1992).

Regarding use of appropriate methods of presentation, findings disclosed that graduate students are indebted to specific presentation skills, such as displaying

enthusiasm, bringing creativity, and sharing experiences. Enthusiasm has been regarded as “one of the most important characteristics of the effective instructor” (Mayo et al., 1993, p. 232). That is, the effective teacher exhibits enthusiasm to make the class more interesting for students. In addition, “innovativeness is necessary in order to be an effective teacher” (Madu & Kuei, 1993, p. 333). Learning is an active process in which students’ needs and expectations have been influenced by their background, previous experiences, and future outlook (Das & El-Sabban, 1996). Consequently, in order to enhance learning, graduate teachers need to be creative and utilize different strategies to avoid tedious routine in class. Furthermore, using experience as a way of learning and as a resource for learning, are two fundamental concepts in adult education (Cranton, 1992, p. 57). With the range of backgrounds, age and attitudes (Corder, 2002), adult learners continually try to make sense of their experience (Panasuk & Lebaron, 1999, p 358), and “demand strong links between educational theory and experiential learning methods” (Madu & Kuei, p. 335). Besides, it is worth noting that the literature reviewed did not explore the caution of using the teacher’s personal experiences. This study did, however, expose that the personal life experiences utilized in class must be related to the course and must add value to student learning. Otherwise, incorporating personal experiences into the classroom is not always necessary.

Challenging and motivating students. Surprisingly, challenging and motivating students was revealed as the central and paramount dimension of teacher effectiveness (see Figure 1); in other words, it was found as the fundamental motive of other dimensions discovered by this study. The reason for this may be due to the fact that it is directly associated with student initiatives to learn. The reviewed literature has

manifested that to challenge and motivate students to learn and to participate in learning activities may be one of the most onerous tasks in education (Smittle, 2003). In order to tackle this obstacle, findings in this study provided feasible suggestions which require the instructor to demonstrate enthusiasm, to empower and encourage students, to maintain high expectations; and to maintain flexibility.

Previous research has indicated that the teacher's enthusiasm makes a huge difference in student learning. An effective teacher must be enthusiastic for the teaching profession, subject matter, and their students (Kerin et al., 1975). "Uninterested teachers cannot motivate students without motivation" (Smittle, 2003, p. 11), whereas the teacher's passion for teaching may positively result in the student's optimistic attitude towards learning. It is believed that the more enthusiastic the teacher is about teaching, the more likely the student is interested in learning.

If the process of teaching adults is to be a democratic and collaborative effort, the instructor should empower and encourage the student. Thus, much of educational literature is rooted in emphasizing the significance of involving adult learners to choose the learning content, learning strategies, and evaluation method (Sisco & Hiemstar, 1991, p. 57). The findings of this research heavily echo the reviewed literature by indicating that instructors should not take students' opinions for granted. Indeed, they should be open-minded, encouraging exploration, analysis, and presentation of students' own ideas. Additionally, students should be invigorated to create their own path in learning. This notion is consistent with the result in Bates and Poole's (2003) work, "an engaged student feels as though he or she is part of the learning process...an engaged student is more likely to be intrinsically motivated" (p. 37). Furthermore, teachers should stimulate

students to take the ownership of learning, as Bates and Poole mentioned “engagement is increased when students feel a sense of control over their own learning” (p. 37). Overall, once given an opportunity to manage learning under the teacher’s supervision, the student’s inherent passion for learning will be aroused in that self-direction seems “more in tune with our natural process of our psychological development” (Knowles, 1975, p. 14).

Adult learners have competing interests and they come to education with various experiences, values, and intentions (Rogers, 2002). This concept seems to coincide with the essentiality of maintaining the high expectations to which the present study has sought to respond. Maintaining high expectations meets the adult learner’s intrinsic learning needs and stimulates students’ motivation for learning. However, those high, but realistic expectations must be made clear to students and what the student must do to achieve expectations must be accurately indicated (Rogers).

This study also revealed that graduate students enjoy the flexibility of the teaching content and format, the class schedule, and deadlines for assignments. These findings offer an appropriate corroboration with some theories identified in the reviewed literature. One of the five attributes for learner-centered adult education outlined by Maclearn (1987) is the emergent and adaptable design of the course process. Cranton (1992) also points out that the practice of adult education necessitates that instructors identify needs and interests of learners and provide options and flexibility to match individual preferences.

Rapport with students. Solas (1990) indicates that the most substantial characteristic of effective teaching is the sound relationship between instructor and student. The present findings conformed to this perception, but explored it in more depth.

Care is one of the three subcategories in this markedly important dimension. Care, based on the findings of this study, embraces caring about the student as a person, and caring about student learning. This notion overlaps the finding from Smittle's (2003) research which points out that "an effective instructor is respectful of students and is concerned about students' progress" (p. 11). Adult learners are in the middle of a process of growth (Rogers, 2002). They may lack self-confidence in an unfamiliar learning environment; they could be frightened of failing and full of apprehension and anxiety (Corder, 2002). As a result, the instructor must be friendly and compassionate to understand the students' position (Greimel-Fuhrmann & Geyer, 2003); must show concern for student learning (Donaldson et al., 1993; Ng, et. al, 2002); and must "encourage students by providing a climate of caring and trust" (Bates & Poole, 2003, p. 42). The instructor's caring ability has a profound effect on the student's performance. As the present study demonstrated, it helps the teacher win respect from the student; aids to develop a good relationship between teacher and student; facilitates the student to build self-confidence; and most importantly, increases the student's motivation for learning.

One-on-one relationship and approachability are another two subcategories discovered under this dimension. At the graduate level, students anticipate to receive more individual attention from the instructor. Findings showed that the one-on-one touch relationship implants confidence and enthusiasm in students; helps to build rapport with students; and motivates students to learn. Without question, the educational impact of faculty is enhanced when their contacts with students extend beyond the formal classroom to informal non-classroom settings (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). However, in order to build up a solid one-on-one relationship, the instructor must be approachable.

From the student's perspectives, approachability means being able to talk at any time with an instructor without feeling awkward. For a teacher, approachability refers to being more than willing to take their time to help students. Approachability is one critical element that allows instructors and students to get to know each other on a personal level. As Stollenwerk (2004) commented that approachability facilitates students in class to feel free to ask questions and make comments; and allows students to display his or her learning positively.

Learning environment. This dimension was directly expected to manifest as an important element in this study, since the relevant literature (e.g., Volkwein & Cabrera, 1998) suggests that the most significant factor in affecting multiple aspects of student growth and satisfaction is the classroom environment. Findings in this study revealed two fundamental rudiments of an effective learning environment. An inviting, respectful, and safe learning environment provides the student with comfort for learning, while a stimulating and challenging learning environment supplies the student with motivation for learning. These concerns seem to voice the finding reported by George et al. (1977) that “a student’s learning should lead to positive consequences. Learning environments should be designed to eliminate things which cause students to become frustrated, confused, anxious, bored, etc.” (p. 33). As a result, there is no doubt that the instructor at the graduate level must take the responsibility as “a facilitator” (Cranton, 1992; Feldman, 1976) to create the effective learning environment or class atmosphere in an effort to positively influence student learning and increase their academic achievements.

Course demands. This dimension became apparent as a less important but needful factor of teacher effectiveness in this study. Relevant course materials, balanced

workload difficulty, practical course designs, and quality-motivated assignments are four vital components of course demands discovered in the present study. Such findings are strongly related to the reviewed literature. An effective instructor will emphasize the relevance of the class material (Donaldson et al., 1993; Lowe & Brock, 1994). An overwhelming workload may hinder the student's motivation; therefore, there is a need for balance in workload. Moreover, considering the student's diverse needs and interests (Madu & Kuei, 1993, p. 335), the course design should be creative and practical. In respect to the assignment, it should be on a more quality-driven and outcome-motivated basis; should be aligned with teaching goals (Ng et al., 2002); and should animate creative thinking and critical thinking (Lowe & Brock).

Assessment and feedback. This dimension, in the light of the findings of this study, helps students to promote personal growth and reflection, to diagnose future learning needs, to improve the learning process, and eventually to become more effective learners. This importance of providing meaningful assessment and feedback has not been investigated in the reviewed literature. However, findings related to how the student should be assessed and what kind of feedback needs to be given correspond closely to the reviewed literature. This study revealed that providing students with realistic, accurate, fair, and up-to-date assessment along with clear, meaningful, and consistent feedback, is a vital responsibility for teachers in the teaching process. Similarly, the reviewed literature has demonstrated that the instructor must clearly define methods of assessment (Lowe & Brock, 1994). Assessment must be directly related to the learning outcomes of the course (Bates & Poole, 2003). Feedback must be provided to the learner on whether the task has been successfully accomplished (Bates & Poole, 2003, p. 43). "Early,

frequent, meaningful, and clear feedback” (Smittle, 2003, p. 11) is a necessary factor in helping students enhance learning.

Three Controversial Issues in the Reviewed Literature

In this study, three controversial issues which have been on a heated debate in the reviewed literature were analyzed and clarified. These issues include the high-order factors and first-order factors, the instructor’s personality factor and teacher effectiveness, and the instructor’s research involvement and teacher effectiveness.

Higher-order factors and first-order factors. The higher-order factor (see Table 1) emphasizes on a single, relatively one dimensional, global domain of a concept in the teacher effectiveness evaluation. The first-order factor (see Table 2 & Table 3) is a more specific category, which is based on multiple, relatively distinct components of a concept. There is a constant debate over the first-order and second-order model of teacher evaluation. From the above discussion, it is obvious to see that the first order factor is more suitable for this study. As Marsh (1991) remarks, student evaluations of teacher effectiveness are multidimensional and their responses should not be sufficiently explained by one or a small number of dimensions. Indeed, he advanced that general items cannot adequately represent the multidimensionality of teaching.

However, it is worth pointing that the higher-order factor is not discordant with the present findings. In essence, seven major dimensions could appropriately fall under Kolitch and Dean’s (1998) higher-order factor model (see Table 1), which includes intellectual excitement, interpersonal rapport, and alignment. According to Lowman (1996), intellectual excitement refers to how understandable and engrossing the instructor’s class is. It portrays instructors as performers who have a solid command of

subject matter to stimulate and motivate students. In this case, the three first-order factors discovered by the present research—good command of subject matter, presentation skills, and challenging and motivating students would be loaded in this category. Interpersonal rapport refers to how positive and helpful instructors are when dealing with students. Effective teachers demonstrate strong positive attitudes toward students (Lowman). Accordingly, rapport with student and learning environment would be captured by this category. Alignment refers to effective teachers as those who clearly lay out course objectives; state the expectations at the start of the course; and organize a course to meet specific objectives (Kolitch & Dean). Consequently, course demand as well as assessment and feedback would be placed under this category.

Personality and teacher effectiveness. The majority of the participants in this study deemed that having a positive personality could help the instructor increase teacher effectiveness. Instructors regarded as effective are characterized by qualities of empathy, compassion, open-mindedness, supportiveness, and enthusiasm. Their attitude of friendliness and warmth is conveyed by specific behaviors, such as smiling, greeting, and promoting a caring atmosphere. Such an atmosphere stimulates student participation, facilitates the learning process, thereby increasing the general effectiveness of the instructor. Some reviewed literature argues for this positive correlation of personality and teacher effectiveness. Educators (e.g., Parker & Spink, 1997; Ramsden, 1992; Yost, 2002) propose that the teacher's personal traits are playing an important role in the definition of an ideal teacher. According to Feldman (1986), "the more effective the teacher appears to be, the more likely the teacher is perceived as energetic, sympathetic, ascendant,

reflective, high in self-regard, flexible, emotionally stable, sociable, intelligent, and responsible” (p. 159).

However, some participants conceived that the personality factor is not indispensable to be an effective teacher. This notion is echoed by Ramsden (1991), who contends that instructors’ personalities have little to do with effective teaching. A similar statement was made by Stollenwerk (2004), “using assessments of personality, attitude...was too remote from the teacher’s day-to-day work in the classroom to contribute meaningfully to a definition of a good teacher” (p. 6).

Research involvement and teacher effectiveness. This issue has been plagued by controversy in the literature for many years (Lindsay et al., 2002). The findings of this study revealed that teaching and doing research are imperative components for a successful professor at the graduate level.

Research involvement is absolutely necessary to the instructor because teachers teach best what they know best (Bemowski, 1991). It is advantageous to the student because it may provide an opportunity for students to experientially learn about the research. However, the instructor must be aware that there needs to be a balance between teaching and performing research. As Marsh and Hattie (2002) caution that unsatisfactory classroom performance might result from instructors who neglect their teaching responsibilities in order to pursue research and publication endeavors. The time and energy required to pursue research is limited by the demands of classroom teaching.

Interestingly, my findings of this study provided some suggestions (see Chapter Four, p. 109) to aid the instructor in keeping a balance between these two activities. It was

hoped that these suggestions would contribute to the existing information and enrich the knowledge base of this issue.

Implications

The findings in this research offered implications for theory, practice, and future research. It was intended that the results of this study would enrich the knowledge base of teacher effectiveness, and improve the teaching quality at the graduate level.

Implications for Theory

As stated earlier, seven major dimensions of teacher effectiveness emerged in the present research. It is interesting to note that challenging and motivating students is the central dimension. Presentation skills and rapport with students are extremely significant factors, whereas learning environment, course demands, as well as assessment and feedback are less important but indispensable factors. A definition of teacher effectiveness at the graduate level must take these factors into account. Effective teachers are generally regarded by students as high on all dimensions included in this analysis but not equally high on all important characteristics. It appears that effective teachers can compensate for deficiencies in one or two areas by demonstrating outstanding skills in other areas. Additionally, a positive instructor personality contributes to teacher effectiveness; however, the personality factor is not so pertinent in evaluating teacher effectiveness.

Another implication for theory has to do with the multidimensionality of teaching and learning. Graduate student population has become more diverse and heterogeneous. Students differ considerably in backgrounds, cultures, outlooks, expectations, abilities, needs, and learning styles. The teaching design must be equally varied to accommodate

these individual differences; the instructor must be willing to teach responsively to meet individual needs. The multidimensionality of teaching and learning provides a reasonable explanation for why there is no common agreement upon definition and measure of teacher effectiveness at the graduate level.

This study also showed the importance and success of the qualitative research approach and grounded theory design when dealing with graduate student's perceptions of teacher effectiveness. In comparison to the reviewed literature, one of the predominate characteristics of the findings in this study was that results were more in detail, if not innovative. The grounded theory generated in the present study dissipates many of the ambiguities found in the reviewed literature. It also lays a strong foundation to encourage other researchers to use this methodology to explore teacher effectiveness from the student's perspectives.

Implications for Practice

Implications for instructors. One significant aim of this study was to provide instructors with first-hand information to achieve accountability and improve their teaching strategies. The implications for instructors are, therefore, extensive.

First, and most importantly, the instructor must acknowledge that graduate students are in the middle of a process of growth. They come to education with different experiences, values, expectations, interests, and patterns of learning (Rogers, 2002). Those general characteristics of the adult learner require that the emphasis of adult education should be on the provision of what the student needs to learn. Accordingly, the instructor must utilize a variety of teaching strategies to meet the individual differences and promote the student's self-directed learning process (Cranton, 1992).

Second, the adult educator is one who supports personal growth, encourages changes in self-perception and self-concept, and facilitates the development of self-awareness (Rogers, 1951, cited in Cranton, 1992, p. 8). In an attempt to help the student achieve the greatest learning outcomes, the instructor at the graduate level must play different roles in the context of what students' value.

- The expert role requires that the instructor be adequately knowledgeable and familiar with the teaching materials and to have a good command of subject matter. In order to present profitably in class, the instructor must exhibit enthusiasm to prevent boredom; employ creativity to avoid routine; share personal experiences to deliver practical knowledge.
- In the challenger or motivator role, the instructor must demonstrate enthusiasm about teaching and for students; empower students to take responsibility for their own learning; raise the academic expectations that are consistent with what should be delivered; and maintain flexibility to facilitate student learning.
- As a facilitator or co-worker, it is the instructor's responsibility to create a comfortable, supportive, respectful, and stimulating atmosphere in which adult learners feel accepted and encouraged to diagnose their own needs and design their own learning plans.
- In the planner role, course demands must be tailored to the student's learning needs. There should be a balance when choosing course materials and distributing workload on a diverse and applicable basis. The realistic, accurate, fair, and ongoing assignment must be allocated on a quality-driven and

outcome-motivated basis. Clear, meaningful, and consistent feedback needs to be provided to promote a higher level of learning.

- The adult educator acts as a role model which the student may observe, imitate, and eventually apply what they have learned to their learning process and real life experience (Cranton, 1992, pp. 69-99).
- As an advisor or mentor, the instructor must build a great rapport with students to increase students' motivation of learning. The teacher must care about the student as a person and the student's learning; improve one-on-one communication with students; and enhance approachability for students. As well, the instructor mentors students to help personal development, encourage students to make wise choices, or facilitate them to make the transition from the educational system to society (Zeeb, 1998).
- As a researcher, the instructor should conduct research to enrich his/her knowledge base and share the research with students to feed teaching. However, the instructor must be aware that too much research may result in the neglect of teaching responsibilities. There should be a balance between research involvement and teaching activities.

Last, but not least, teaching is a very personal act, and it is hard to accept criticism of something so close to our essence. But helping learners to learn is the most significant function a teacher can perform (Smith, 1982). "If we cannot or if we react defensively, we destroy all hope of getting honest and useful student feedback" (Svinicki, 2001, p. 24). Being open to constructive criticism and accepting student input or criticism in a positive way is essential to improve teacher effectiveness.

Implications for Administrators. Another important purpose of this study intended to supply administrators with feasible strategies to develop more effective procedures to promote effective educational experiences. It is essential for administrators to understand the nature of adult education and characteristics of adult learners. Accordingly, administrators must create awareness of the multidimensionality of teaching and learning. Teaching is a complex activity consisting of multiple dimensions, and, therefore, evaluations of teachers should reflect this multidimensionality. Consequently, teacher effectiveness cannot be summarized or generalized in a single evaluative trend; any instrument or methodology which focuses on a unidimensional construct is likely to be inadequate; teacher effectiveness should be based on several attributes (Palmer, 1998).

Moreover, the student should be considered to be the major source when evaluating teacher effectiveness. Involving students in the evaluation process helps them to reflect on what has been learned and how the learning has been mastered. Student feedback converted into teaching improvement increases teacher effectiveness. Students can provide a unique perspective on teaching when they are asked the right questions, in the appropriate format, at a propitious time, and with a clear understanding of the purposes of the inquiry. They should be included as only one part of an instructor's teaching portfolio that also features open-ended student comments, samples of student work, peer evaluations, course syllabi, a narrative of teaching philosophy, and descriptions of professional activities (Kolitch & Dean, 1998).

Administrators must acknowledge teaching is not something that anybody can do. It is a skill that takes years to develop. Knowledge is ever-changing and ever-growing. In order to master the art of teaching, the instructor would need professional training.

Administrators, as a consequence, must provide the supportive and responsive atmosphere for instructors in their professional development, which is “the key to helping effective teachers manage change that is inherent in the 21st century” (Smittle, 2003, p. 12).

As it is important for the instructor to promote the student’s motivation to learn, it is also vital for administrators to enhance the teacher’s enthusiasm for teaching. Teacher effectiveness could be further enhanced if teachers developed teaching manuals with unique skills that can be shared with colleagues (Madu & Kuei, 1993). As well, there is need for a better way to appreciate the instructor’s role as a teacher and researcher so that the instructor would not compromise teaching quality over their research endeavors.

Implications for Further Research

Although the studies yield some inconsistencies in defining elements of effectiveness, careful exploration of the research, nevertheless, helps confirm which practices are most important and which factors require further investigation. Upon the completion of this study, several issues presented themselves as areas that could be developed, discussed, questioned, and researched. Five major areas are in need of future study as follows.

First of all, it should be reiterated at this time that this study has limitations in that it is the grounded theory research that was conducted with a particular master program in a specific department. The results, therefore, are only reflective of a particular setting. Any findings cannot be extrapolated beyond this group. Additional research is needed to determine what teaching characteristics are most highly valued by graduate students in different settings or across the settings.

Moreover, the findings of this study showed that male and female students considered similar criteria when judging the effectiveness of an instructor. That is, no systematic discrepancies were identified between the male and female participant's perceptions of what constitutes an effective teacher. What factors have led to this congruity? Is it possible that the limitations of this study disguised the intrinsic difference? For example, there was no broad range of race considered in the process of recruiting participants. Mogadime (2003) remarks that "it is necessary to examine the inevitable presence of race, class and sexuality in relations" (p. 8) between the teacher and the student. She also emphasizes that "it is essential to understand how racial power dynamics might shape and/or constrain the interactions between teachers and students" (p. 8). Future research should investigate the relations between gender issues and teacher effectiveness and the relations between feminist pedagogy and teacher effectiveness.

Furthermore, research also needs to be carried out in the field of whether age differences affect the student's perceptions of teacher effectiveness. Findings from this study displayed a broad range of opinions regarding this issue. Tina, who is in her 50s had different, even opposite perceptions in comparison with participants in their 20s or 30s. Reasons contributing to this discrepancy were not explored in depth in this study, but are recommended for further research.

Additionally, the initial interviews and post-interviews were conducted in a three-month period of time. How would the result differ if the first interviews were conducted at the beginning of the participant's program and the second set of interviews at the end of the program?

Finally, a very important issue which has not been explored in this study, but would be of value to do so in the future research, is the influence of graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness on their prospective profession.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the full-time graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. The flexible design of grounded theory qualitative research was implemented as it enabled the participants to share their views about the problems being studied. The data collection, the data analysis, and presentation of findings were driven by the following researchable questions:

- What is the importance of teacher effectiveness to graduate students?
- How do graduate students define and measure teacher effectiveness?
- What major dimensions of teacher effectiveness do students perceive as most important at the graduate level?
- How do these dimensions of teacher effectiveness influence graduate students academically and emotionally?

The findings of this study suggested that teacher effectiveness is essential to graduate students as it instills confidence into the student to become an effective learner; provides the right direction for the student to reach the learning goal; and stimulates the students' motivation and enthusiasm to learn.

This study also revealed that there is no universal consensus on definition and measure of teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives. The reason for this is the multidimensionality of teaching and learning as well as the nature of adult education. Graduate students come to education with various cultures, backgrounds,

interests, expectations, learning needs and styles. Thus, what counts as effective in one context may not be so in another (Brown & Atkins, 1988, p. 4). This requires the teacher at the graduate level to design the course with the student's needs in mind and teach responsively to meet the individual differences.

Seven major dimensions of teacher effectiveness were discovered in this study. Such dimensions embrace good command of subject matter, good presentation skills, challenging and motivating students, rapport with students, effective learning environment, balanced course demands, as well as beneficial assessment and feedback. For those to occur, it is essential for all involved in education to realize that the purpose of effective teaching is to facilitate student learning. Therefore, the teacher at the graduate level must play different roles to respond to concerns over accountability and make an effort to achieve quality outcomes by promoting students' capacity to learn, encouraging students to achieve beyond their own expectations and foster independent learning processes.

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Appendix A:

Email Script for Participant Invitation

Dear Graduate Student,

This is Hannah (Xiaojun) Shi. Remember in the course we took together, I mentioned to you that I was very interested in teacher effectiveness? It is finally my thesis topic. The title is “What matters? The Full-time Graduate Students’ Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness”.

Teachers have a powerful, long-lasting influence on their students. Thus, it is important to understand what teachers should do to promote positive results in the lives of students. I always wonder why different teachers have various teaching effects, even though they use the same teaching materials; they employ very similar teaching skills; and they teach the same group of students. What contributes to these differences? What matters to students at the graduate level?

The purpose of this study is to identify the nature of teacher effectiveness, to indicate the importance of teacher effectiveness, and to explore different dimensions for evaluating teacher effectiveness from graduate students’ perspectives. By focusing on teacher effectiveness, the goal of this study is to provide first-hand information for the instructor and the administrator to improve the educational experiences and achievement of the students (Braskamp, Brandenburg, & Ory, 1984).

I am interested in unearthing answers to questions such as the following: Tell me about your experience as a graduate student. How do you define teacher effectiveness? Do you think teacher effectiveness important? Why or why not? How do you, as a graduate student, measure teacher effectiveness?

If you are interested in learning more about this study, please contact me at hannahshi@hotmail.com or 905-687-3562 for further details. Please note that the Research Ethics Board of Brock University has officially approved this study (File # 03-413 -Shi).

Thank you for your kind attention and consideration.

Regards,

Xiaojun Shi
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education
Brock University
905-687-3562
hannahshi@hotmail.com

Appendix B:

Letter of Information

Study Title: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Dear Participant,

I am a graduate student in the MEd program at Brock University. In partial fulfillment of my Master of Education degree, I cordially invite you to participate in this research project on "What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness".

The purpose of this study is to identify the nature of teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives, to indicate the importance of teacher effectiveness, and to explore different dimensions of teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives. By focusing on teacher effectiveness, the goal of this study is to provide first-hand information for the instructor and the administrator to improve the educational experiences and achievement of the students (Braskamp, Brandenburg, & Ory, 1984).

I am interested in unearthing answers to questions such as the following: Tell me about your experience as a graduate student. How do you define teacher effectiveness? Do you think teacher effectiveness important? Why or why not? How do you, as a graduate student measure teacher effectiveness?

The study requires your attendance at two audiotaped interviews, approximately 40-60 minutes each. I will schedule the interviews at a time and a place that are convenient for you.

Following the first interview, you will receive a copy of the interview transcript. In the second, follow-up interview, we will focus on any questions or comments you may have about the transcript. The second interview will also provide me with the opportunity to address any main themes that emerge from the first interview. Questions will be asked such as the following: In the first interviews, you said that all your teachers in graduate school were excellent. Can you tell me what would have been an example of someone who was not? You said that you also learned from poor teachers. Can you tell me what you learned?

The second interview will also be transcribed and a copy of that transcript will be sent to you. You will be encouraged to comment, correct, or clarify any information on the

transcript, sign it, and then return it to me at your earliest convenience. If you would like a copy of your transcript for your records, a clean copy will be provided.

By participating in this study, you will understand teacher effectiveness more systematically and accurately. The process of sharing your perceptions of teacher effectiveness may help you reflect on your own teaching and learning experiences so that you will attempt to improve teaching strategies and to be more effective teachers in your future career. Most importantly, this study will provide educators with first-hand information from graduate students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. It is anticipated that administrators and teachers will better understand the concept of teacher effectiveness and develop more effective procedures to enhance teacher effectiveness at the graduate level.

Please be aware that you have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without need for explanation of any reason. You will be asked to select a pseudonym to ensure your anonymity and confidentiality. Your name will not be identifiable throughout the study. I will be the only person that knows the names and corresponding pseudonyms of the participants. For confidentiality of data, all data including paper data, electronic data, and audiotapes will be stored securely in the locked cabinet of my bedroom. In terms of the final disposal, all data will be destroyed 3 years after the completion of the thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you can contact me at (905) 687-3562 or hannahshi@hotmail.com; Dr, Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University, at (905) 688-5550, ext. 3784 or aschutz@ed.brocku.ca; the Research Ethics Officer of the Office of Research Services at (905) 688-5550 ext. 3035 and/or <http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/>

The Research Ethics Board of Brock University has officially approved this study (File # 03-413-Shi).

Once again, I sincerely thank you for your participation in this study.

Yours,

Xiaojun Shi
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education
Brock University
(905) 6872-3562
hannashi@hotmail.com

Appendix C:

Informed Consent Form

Study Title: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Name of Participant: _____

Date: _____

I understand that I am being asked to participate in the research of "What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness". The purpose of this study in which I have agreed to participate is to identify the nature of teacher effectiveness, to indicate the importance of teacher effectiveness, and to explore different dimensions of teacher effectiveness from graduate students' perspectives.

I understand that the researcher will be using the data from this research to write her thesis in partial fulfillment of her Master of Education degree.

I understand that this study in which I have agreed to participate will involve two audiotaped, individual interviews of approximately 40-60 minutes. I will be invited to review my first interview transcript to prepare for a discussion of any feedback I want to provide and questions I may want to ask that address my concerns around interpretations and clarifications. A copy of my second interview transcript will also be sent to me. I will have the opportunity to comment, correct, or clarify any information on each transcript.

I understand that there will be no financial compensation for my participation.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason without penalty. Also, I understand that there is no obligation to answer any question when I do not feel comfortable.

I understand that I will be asked to self-select a pseudonym to ensure my anonymity and confidentiality. Only the researcher knows the names and corresponding pseudonyms of the participants.

I understand that all paper data, electronic data, audiotapes will be stored securely in the researcher's locked cabinet of her bedroom. In terms of the final disposal, the researcher

will destroy all the data in 3 years after the completion of the thesis. Professors, students, or other researchers will not reanalyze this data in the future.

I understand that I may request, and obtain a copy of the research results and/or thesis report.

I have read and understood the above information. I reserve the right to ask questions about the project at any time. By signing this Informed Consent Form, I am indicating free consent to research participation.

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Should any participants be interested, copies of a final summary report will be made available upon request.

Thank you for your interest in this study!

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Brock Research Ethics Board. (File # 03-413 - Shi)

Please take one copy of this form with you for further reference.

I have fully explained the procedures of this study to the above participant.

Researcher _____ Date _____

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you can contact me at (905) 687-3562 or hannahshi@hotmail.com; Dr, Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University, at (905) 688-5550, ext. 3784 or aschutz@ed.brocku.ca; the Research Ethics Officer of the Office of Research Services at (905) 688-5550 ext. 3035; and/or <http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/>

Xiaojun Shi
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education
Brock University
(905) 687-3562
hannashi@hotmail.com

Appendix D:

Questions of the First Interview

Study Title: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

1. Tell me about your experience as a graduate student.
2. How do you define teacher effectiveness?
3. Do you think teacher effectiveness is important? Why or why not?
4. How do you, as a graduate student measure, teacher effectiveness?
5. Compared to your undergraduate studies, what kind of special/different characteristics do you expect to see in teachers at the graduate school level?
6. Tell me about one of your effective teachers who you have encountered in graduate school. How did such effective teaching influence your academic studies/your emotional feelings /your sense of self/the relationship between you and the teacher?
7. Tell me about an ineffective teacher that you have encountered in graduate school. How did such ineffective teaching influence your academic studies/your emotional feelings /your sense of self/the relationship between you and the teacher?
8. Could you offer some suggestions that would help graduate teachers to be more effective teachers?
9. Is there anything else I could have asked you to help me better understand your perceptions? Is there anything else you would like to add to the discussion?

Appendix E:

Questions of the Second Interview--Lois

Study Title: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Please note that the questions for the second, follow-up interviews emerged from the data collected during the first interviews.

1. In the initial interview, you pointed out that someone who is "up to date" is effective. Would you please elaborate on this point?
2. When talking about the interaction between student and teacher, you mentioned that "professors are really busy, writing research papers, submitting journal articles". What's your opinion about teachers' research involvement and teaching activities?
3. When commenting on the feedback from your professors, you said you preferred the detailed feedback. Were you saying that the comments or feedback you received from your professors are not detailed enough?
4. You stated that some professors are not very approachable. Could you please offer some instances?
5. In the last interview, you described your perception of teacher effectiveness from different aspects. But one aspect you did not touch upon is "presentation skill". Do you think your professors presented the material or teaching content clearly?
6. In the literature, there is a heated debate over the relationship between the professors' personality and teacher effectiveness. Do you think the teachers' personality matters to teacher effectiveness? Why or why not?

Questions for the Second Interview--Vicky

Study Title: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Please note that the questions for the second, follow-up interviews emerged from the data collected during the first interviews.

1. In the initial interview, you mentioned that "the professors shared their own research with us..." What's your opinion about teachers' research involvement and teaching activities?
2. At the end of the first interview, you stated that one particular factor of effective teaching is to change the teaching style and the way information is presented in class. Would you elaborate a bit on this comment? Do you think your professor presented the teaching material or content clearly?
3. In the last interview, you described your perception of teacher effectiveness from different aspects. But one aspect you did not touch upon is "learning environment". Do you remember a particular good learning environment your professors established or a bad learning environment you may have experienced?
4. In the literature, there is a heated debate over the relationship between the professors' personality and teacher effectiveness. Do you think the teachers' personality matters to teacher effectiveness? Why or why not?
5. One participant pointed out that "teaching effectiveness is important but it's not the most important, because for adult learners, at the end of the day, we are responsible for our own learning". What do you think of this statement?

Questions for the Second Interview--Clark

Study Title: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Please note that the questions for the second, follow-up interviews emerged from the data collected during the first interviews.

1. In the first interview, you stated that “teachers at the graduate level should be able to increase the level of learning”. A similar statement from another participant is that “students need some guidance to bring them to a higher level of understanding”. Could you please elaborate a bit on this issue?
2. You mentioned that some “professors see this (teaching) as a job, or as a secondary aspect to their work, below their research...” What do you think of professors’ research involvement and teacher activity?
3. In the literature, there is a heated debate on the relationship between the professors’ personality and teacher effectiveness. Do you think the personality matters to teacher effectiveness? Why or why not?
4. In the first interview, you gave me several factors of teacher effectiveness from different aspects. But one important aspect you did not reach upon is “caring” or “care”. How important is it to you that the teacher is caring?
5. What about course demands, such as the course difficulty, the teaching materials, workload and so on? Do you think they were fair or useful to your learning?
6. What do you think of teachers’ presentation skills? Do you think your professors presented the teaching materials or content clearly?

Questions for the Second Interview--Peter

Study Title: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Please note that the questions for the second, follow-up interviews emerged from the data collected during the first interviews.

1. In the first interview, you mentioned that "one professor might have a really nice personality, so you are receptive to what he says". In the literature, there is a heated debate on the relationship between the professors' personality and teacher effectiveness. Do you think the personality matters to teacher effectiveness? Why or why not?
2. You commented that "professors at the graduate level are more flexible to students' own interests. They assume that students know how to write an essay, and what they expect you to do is to apply the theory to your knowledge and investigate". You felt this is a good thing, but it can also be intimidating. Do you think professors should give students more specific guidance?
3. You talked a lot about evaluation in the last interview, which is very valuable. What about feedback and comments? Did you get the enough and/or useful comments and feedback from your professors?
4. In the last interview, you described your perceptions of teacher effectiveness from different aspects. But one aspect you did not touch upon is "Teaching Competency". Do you think your professors were knowledgeable enough and had a good command of subject matter?
5. What about course demands, such as the course difficulty, the teaching materials, the workload and so on? Do you think they were fair or useful to your learning?

Questions for the Second Interview--Judy

Study Title: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Please note that the questions for the second, follow-up interviews emerged from the data collected during the first interviews.

1. In the first interview, you mentioned that “a professor is also a researcher and advisor. They have a lot of hats to wear. They are not only a teacher, and it may take away from their teacher effectiveness”. What do you think of professors’ research involvement and teaching activities?
2. You suggested that “professors bring personality to the classroom and they personalize things”. In the literature, there is a heated debate over the relationship between the professors’ personality and teacher effectiveness. Do you think the personality matters to teacher effectiveness? Why or why not?
3. When talking about the relationship between instructor and student, you mentioned that “teachers should respect students, not talk down to students”. You said you have seen it a couple of times. Would you please give me some details about this?
4. One of the factors you think effective teachers should have is to be knowledgeable. Would you elaborate a bit on it? Do you think your professors have a good command of subject matter?
5. In the last interview, you described your perceptions of teacher effectiveness from different aspects. But one aspect you did not reach upon is “course commands”, such as the course difficulty, the teaching materials, the workload and so on. Do you think they were fair or useful to your learning?
6. One participant pointed out that “teaching effectiveness is important but it's not the most important because for adult learners, at the end of the day, we are responsible for our own learning”. What do you think of this statement?

Questions for the Second Interview--Tina

Study Title: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Please note that the questions for the second, follow-up interviews emerged from the data collected during the first interviews.

1. What do you think of the evaluation and feedback you got from the professors? Did you receive the enough and/or useful feedback? Was the evaluation fair?
2. In the initial interviews, each participant, except for you, mentioned that effective teachers should bring their life or personal experience into teaching. How do you feel about it?
3. In the literature, there is a heated debate over the relationship between the professors' personality and teacher effectiveness. Do you think the personality matters to teacher effectiveness? Why or why not?
4. What's your opinion on a professor's commitment to research endeavors versus their commitment to teaching in class?
5. In the last interview, you described your perceptions of teacher effectiveness from different aspects. But one aspect you did not reach upon is "presentation skills". Do you think your professors presented the teaching material and content clearly?

Questions for the Second Interview--Bruce

Study Title: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Please note that the questions for the second, follow-up interviews emerged from the data collected during the first interviews.

1. In the first interview, you mentioned that “in some classes we had heated discussion, sometimes personality conflicts, even with himself and other students...” In the literature, there is a heated debate on the relationship between the professors’ personality and teacher effectiveness. Do you think the personality matters to teacher effectiveness? Why or why not?
2. When speaking of teachers’ approachability, you were very considerate: “they also have their own lives, teaching graduate courses, undergrad courses, submitting articles for publishers” What do you think of the professor’s research involvement and teaching activities?
3. Some participants stated that “students need some guidance to bring them to a higher level of understanding”. “Teachers at the graduate level should be able to increase the level of learning”. What do you think of this?
4. One participant pointed out that “teaching effectiveness is important but it's not the most important because for adult learners, at the end of the day, we are responsible for our own learning”. What do you think of this statement?
5. In the last interview, you described your perceptions of teacher effectiveness from different aspects. But one aspect you did not reach upon is “course demands”, such as the level of the material, course difficulty, the workload and so on. Do you think they are fair and useful to your learning?

Questions for the Second Interview—Luke

Study Title: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Please note that the questions for the second, follow-up interviews emerged from the data collected during the first interviews.

1. In the initial interview, you mentioned that “effective teachers should have the ability to link the course to students’ own experience and personal ideas”. Some other participants stated that they really enjoyed the professors to share their personal experiences when teaching. What is your opinion?
2. You commented that effective teachers should be more open-minded. Could you elaborate on this issue?
3. There is a heated debate over the professor’s commitment to research and teaching activities. As a graduate student, what do you think of this issue?
4. In the literature, there is a heated debate over the relationship between the professors’ personality and teacher effectiveness. Do you think the personality matters to teacher effectiveness? Why or why not?
5. In the last interview, you described your perceptions of teacher effectiveness from different aspects. But one aspect you did not reach upon is presentation skills. Do you think your professors presented the teaching material and content clearly?
6. What do you think teacher-student relationship at the graduate school level?

Appendix F:
Appreciation Feedback Letter

Study Title: What Matters? Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

Researcher: Xiaojun Shi, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Alice Schutz, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Date:

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for your participation in this study! I really appreciate your time, effort, patience, and support. By participating in two audiotaped interviews, and by reading and responding to your interview transcripts, you have provided me with useful data which I will use when writing my thesis in partial fulfillment of my Master of Education degree requirements.

Your name will remain confidential and will not be connected with any published data. The audiotapes of your interviews and your interview transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet of my bedroom throughout the study. I am the only person who will access to the raw data. Three years after I have fulfilled the conditions of my graduate degree requirements, I will destroy the audiotapes, shred the interview transcripts, and delete any electronically stored data.

If you are interested, you will receive a copy of my report when the study is complete.

If you have any questions and concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Once again, thank you so much!

Yours truly,

Xiaojun Shi
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education
Brock University
(905) 687-3562
hannahshi@hotmail.com

Appendix G:
Research Ethics Board Approval



Brock University

Research Ethics Board
Room SBH 335

Extensions 3035/3870,

reb@brocku.ca

DATE: Thursday, July 15, 2004
FROM: Linda Rose-Krasnor, Chair
Research Ethics Board (REB)
TO: Alice Schutz, Education
Shi, Ziaojun

FILE: 03-413 - Shi, Xiaojun

TITLE: What Matters? The Full-time Graduate Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above research proposal.

DECISION: Accepted as Clarified

This project has been approved for the period of **July 15, 2004 to February 28, 2005** subject to full REB ratification at the Research Ethics Board's next scheduled meeting. The approval may be extended upon request. *The study may now proceed.*

Please note that the Research Ethics Board (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and approved by the REB. The Board must approve any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to www.BrockU.CA/researchservices/forms.html to complete the appropriate form **REB-03 (2001) Request for Clearance of a Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application.**

Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety

of the participants and the continuation of the protocol.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored. A Final Report is required for all projects, with the exception of undergraduate projects, upon completion of the project. Researchers with projects lasting more than one year are required to submit a Continuing Review Report annually. The Office of Research Services will contact you when this form ***REB-02 (2001) Continuing Review/Final Report*** is required.

Please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence.